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NOVEMBER 1967

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ON DESERT TRAILS by Randall Henderson, founder and publisher of Desert Magazine for 23 years. One of the first good writers to reveal the beauty of the mysterious desert areas. Henderson's experiences, combined with his comments on the desert of yesterday and today, make this a MUST for those who really want to understand the desert. 375 pages, illustrated. Hardcover. \$5.00.

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NOVEMBER, 1967

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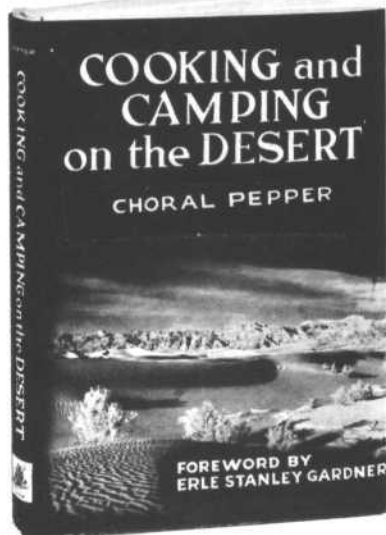
COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS

One of the many spectacular sights in Death Valley is Zabriskie Point as shown by Photographer Robert F. Campbell, Concord, Calif. This year's annual Death Valley 49er Encampment will be held Nov. 9 through 12. The dramatic photograph of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument on the Arizona-Mexico border on Pages 22 and 23 was taken by Don Valentine, Whittier, Calif.

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BOOK REVIEWS



by Choral Pepper
with a chapter on
**Driving and Surviving
on the Desert**
by Jack Pepper

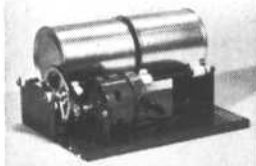
"Cooking and Camping on the Desert" is more than just a book on preparing for a desert outing or making meals that will appeal while in camp. This book is a brief manual on how to survive in the desert . . . the book is a must for anyone making a trip to the desert, whether it is his first or fiftieth. **BILL HILTON, Santa Barbara News-Press.**

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THE HOME BOOK OF WESTERN HUMOR

Edited by Phillip H. Ault

The exuberant, robust humor of early Western settlers contributed a unique chapter to the literature of Western Americana. It became one of people whose struggles were often merciless, laughing at themselves. Most of the anecdotes and humorous comments included in this book grew from the 1830s, but some are of our time. Among the contributors are Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Bill Nye, Will Rogers, Dan DeQuille, Artemus Ward, Dick Wick Hall, Charles Russell, Harry Oliver, Owen Wister, O. Henry, Eugene Field, Ambrose Bierce, and others. Many of the stories have to do with desert places, such as Salton Sea, Death Valley, and early mining camps.

The humorous incidents recounted by Twain and DeQuille have been published a number of times, but this book achieves a freshness in Western humor with inclusions of excerpts from Harry Oliver's Desert Rat Scrap Book and other regional humorists—such as a pun based on a claim that many fine metallurgists were developed in Death Valley because of the mining interests there. One well qualified gentlemen had become so astute he could take a weekend trip to Hollywood, look at a golden blonde, and with one glance determine whether she was virgin metal or just common ore.

The book is hardcover, 364 pages, \$7.50.

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own. Their poetry, prose, avarice, humanism, colonial life, mining accomplishments, religious dedication and superstitions are described as this reviewer has never found them so well described before. Interesting observations revealed in early letters emphasizing the differences in verbal expression between the mestizo and pure Spaniard are set forth, which ultimately resulted in the excessive artificiality in phrasing which is apparent today in Mexican conversation. Other equally revealing episodes illustrate transitions of Mexican cultural development.

This is an enormously interesting book written by a native of Mexico City who divides his time between living in the capital and among remote Indian tribes. It was translated from Spanish by Joan MacLean, whose interpretation escapes the deadliness of style evident in so many translations. Hardcover, 296, \$7.50.

EXPLORING JOSHUA TREE

By Roger Mitchell

This little paperback book, well-illustrated with photographs, is a splendid guide to the prehistory, mining history, flora, fauna, trails, campgrounds and roads of Joshua Tree National Monument. It tells the history of the area, differentiates between the Colorado and Mohave deserts—which meet within the environs of the park—and contains a fine map. It is well-written by one of DESERT's most popular writers. We highly recommend it to anyone interested in this fascinating area where unique geology and desert flora combine to provide one of the most interesting settings on the Southern California desert. Paperback, 36 pages, \$1.00.

THE CENTURY AFTER CORTES

By Fernando Benitez

The colorful episodes of history that capture the imaginations of readers are often exploited by writers while equally significant eras, but less bold, are ignored. This has been the fate of Mexico's post-Cortes era, those hundred years following the great Conquest when a newly minted aristocracy descended from the Spanish Conquistador established the feudal structure that ruled New Spain. It was the "Creole"—those of Spanish blood born in Mexico—who initially gave the Mexican a distinct national personality of its



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The Wonder of Christmas fills the World — May the Peace and Joy of Christmas, etc. — **Thomas**



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God's Candlesticks — May you have the Spirit of Christmas which is Peace, etc. — **Lowdermilk**



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Desert Glow — May the warmth... of the Christmas Season be with you all the Year — **Penney**



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BOOKS

Continued from Page 5

TALES THE WESTERN TOMBSTONES TELL

By Lambert Florin

Second in a series about tombstones by this famous ghost town writer, the new book brings to life the famous and infamous, the bad guy and the good guy, the gals like Lizzie King who was buried between her lover and her husband and the long-suffering women who traveled the ill-fated Meek trail. With robust humor, Florin writes about Jane Barnes, a London barmaid who divided her time between two lovers who safeguarded her honor in an Oregon seaport by standing alternate watches. He recounts the brief history of the President of California whose month of glory took place in Sonoma and he does a beautiful job with a chapter on Jack London.

As in his ghost town series, the material covered in this book reaches from Washington to Colorado, including California, Idaho, Montana, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada. Florin has a knack for tuning into bits of human interest history found in letters and private sources which give a fresh slant to well-worn tales. His style is virile, his information accurate. He is, perhaps, the most outstanding recorder of Western Americana of our time.

Large format, profusely illustrated with magnificent photographs, 192 pages, \$12.95.

TRAILS AND TALES OF BAJA

By Pel Carter

This is a warm, happy book about a 65-year old groom and his middle-aged bride who bought a four-wheel drive pickup with camper to take a Baja honeymoon. They ran into storms and road slides en route, which frightened them into a retreat, but on their second attempt they made it all of the way to the toe of the Baja California peninsula. A love of the people of Baja and their simple, but dignified, way of life is reflected on each page. Many of this couple's experiences are ones that could and would happen to you were you to make the trip. Their fishing adventures will be eagerly read by sportsmen and campers will pick up much good advice. Full color photographs, 206 pages, paperback, \$4.80.

Defiant Desert Dweller



by Phil Goodson



HE MOST non-conforming hippie in the rodent world is the Kangaroo Rat. This awesome creature breaks a major law of nature. He goes through his entire life without swallowing a single drop of water!

Known in our Southwest deserts as the Kangaroo Rat, (*Dipodomys ordii*) this same general type of rodent is found in all of the major deserts of the world, including Australia, Asia and Africa. For a rat's eye view of life inside a blast furnace, imagine pocket areas of desert land where moisture is practically nonexistent—areas which go without rain for years at a time. It's here, with naked soil predominantly of silica, that heat from the sun's rays are magnified and reflected from one grain of sand to the next, from one sand dune to the other, until surface temperature is built up to such a point that any luckless creature caught trying to creep from one refuge to another, is cooked as if placed on a hot bed of coals.

Only one thing on the desert is as scarce as rain and that's shade. The Kangaroo Rat spends his daylight hours underground in order to escape the unchecked rays from the sun. There is no refuge above. The only shaded area containing sufficient humidity for the Kan-

garoo Rat to survive is in his underground tunnel.

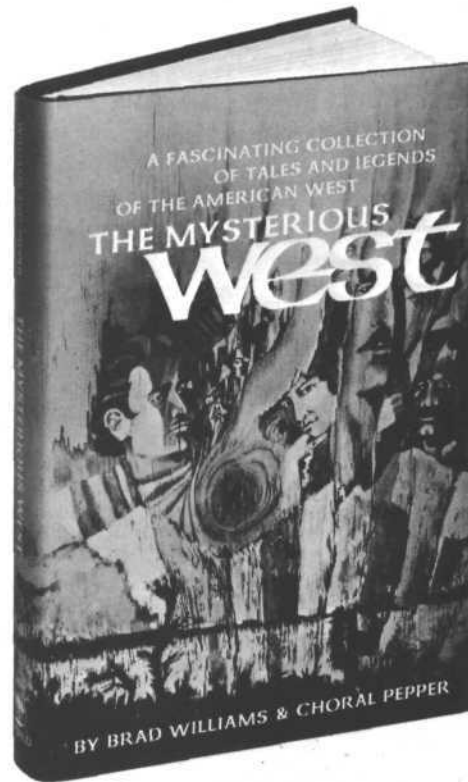
While other animals have found ingenious ways to overcome the desert's shortage of water, such as chewing into the juicy centers of cacti or burrowing down to the moisture-laden roots of a shrub, the cunning Kangaroo Rat simply makes his own water. When old-timers used to claim that this little desert rat lived entirely without water, they were accused of fabricating the yarn to make fools of gullible greenhorns. But as it turned out, the old-timer was absolutely right. The Kangaroo Rat can live where there is no water because he manufactures his own.

How does he do it? It's easy, if you're a Kangaroo Rat. By eating only dry foods, he is able to convert some of it to water by a unique internal process in which the hydrogen in his diet is oxidized. The amount of water thus attained is meager, but so are his needs. In addition to his small size, his sweat glands are few so his body loses little in perspiration. Then, to carry on the process of waste disposal, he possesses kidneys four times more efficient than man's. By not conforming to the general rule that water is necessary to life, he defies the desert's worst threat. The Kangaroo Rat is probably our most extraordinary specialist in the field of desert survival. □

Here's a book with new factual evidence on the legends of the West.

PUBLICATION DATE

NOVEMBER 1, 1967



THE MYSTERIOUS WEST.

by Brad Williams and
Choral Pepper \$5.95

This book examines many little-known stories and legends that have emerged from the western regions of North America. Two unsolved mysteries, unearthed in this century and detailed in this absorbing book, furnish evidence that the earliest European navigators to set foot on American soil date back to ancient times. Old Roman artifacts buried near Tucson, Arizona, and Phoenician hieroglyphics inscribed on a rock uncovered some miles southwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico, raise startling questions about America's past. Are these genuine archeological finds or elaborately conceived and executed hoaxes? These unusual discoveries form but a small part of the intriguing history, legend, and folklore that make up

THE MYSTERIOUS WEST.

Included are such phenomena as the discovery of a Spanish galleon in the middle of the desert; the strange curse that rules over San Miguel Island; the unexplained beheading of at least 13 victims in the Nahanni Valley; and many other equally bewildering happenings. Elaborate confidence schemes and fantastically imagined hoaxes are documented, along with new factual evidence that seems to corroborate what were formerly assumed to be tall tales.

Illustrated with photographs, this fascinating survey of Western Americana will be welcomed by all readers interested in the folklore and history of the United States.

About the authors:

BRAD WILLIAMS has worked for various newspapers ranging in location from Oregon and California, to Mexico and India. He has published several mystery novels and nonfiction works; his books include *Flight 967* and *Due Process*.

CHORAL PEPPER hails from the mysterious west — Palm Desert, California. She is the editor of *Desert Magazine* and she has been a columnist, free-lance writer, and author. Her most recent book is *Zodiac Parties*.



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A strange story about

A Town Without a Past

by Robert Hyatt



If you like mystery and riddles, the ghost town of Trementina, 50 miles east of Las Vegas, N.M., is your dish. But to solve this puzzle you'll have to be better than the local historians, who can't tell you who built the town, or when, or why it was abandoned—whenever that was.

Trementina is Spanish for turpentine, and the extraction of this product was the reason for the town's founding. Or so it is believed. However, pinon and juniper are the only trees in the area, and they are far from being good turpentine producers.

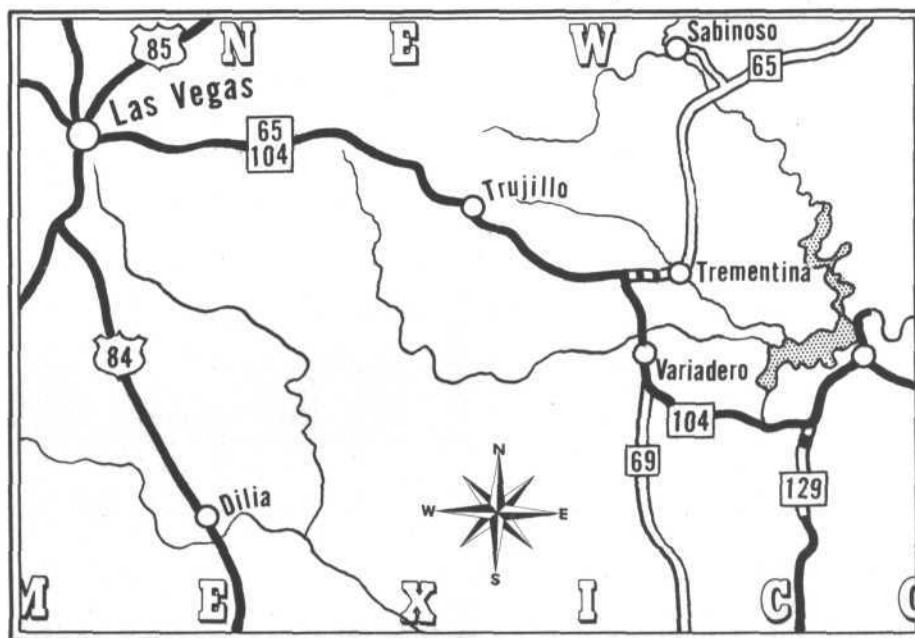
Now, if the purpose of the town was the production of turpentine, why build it many miles from pine trees and a main road? These are questions often asked about Trementina, but they are not the only ones by any means.

Let's explore a few other possibilities for this town's existence. Of the two dozen plus buildings and homes still standing, one was definitely a bank, one a non-Catholic church, and one a large dormitory-like building with an outside entrance to each of its single rooms—like the quarters of monks. None of the rooms connect with inside doors.

The church is believed to be some Protestant denomination. There is a sign on it reading, "Built in memory of Santiago Blea and Juanita Blea, 1912." Such a recent building date (if that is what this sign means) would indicate that there were records of its construction. There are none in Las Vegas or Santa Fe. Where were the building materials secured?

There is a large rock in the town with 1832 carved on its face. Founding date? *Quien sabe?*

If a religious order caused the establishment of Trementina, as the dormitory-like building suggests, then what order or religion? This is predominantly a Roman Catholic region, as is all of New Mexico. Very old and tattered religious tracts, of Protestant origin, have been found in some of the public buildings—but this



is not conclusive; they could have been scattered there after the town's abandonment.

As you enter the town, from Highway 65, you see first the rusted tin roofs, a novelty in New Mexico. And again, most of the buildings are masoned like those in Indian pueblos, although, unlike Indian houses, only a few are adobe; most are built of stones and apparently without cement. Some of these are plastered with adobe inside, especially homes. Peer inside one of these houses and you'll see a beautiful rush-and-pole ceiling, smooth walls, flat adobe floor. In a few the window shades are still there, discreetly drawn, yard gate latched.

It is as if the whole settlement had an air of waiting—waiting for its people to return. Somehow you feel, visiting here, that the residents have just left on some holiday and will be back. But the wide, mesquite-choked streets and the bear grass and cholla growing wildly in the house yards tell you this is not true. Long years of abandonment are starkly visible.

Not far from the church and dormitory is the strangest sight of all. Stone-slab-covered graves built above-ground dot the

surface, like graves one finds now and then in cemeteries of Mexico, but never in New Mexico. Chiseled lettering on the top slabs is no longer visible, but the suns, moons, clouds and animals in faded red paint are still there, strangely suggestive of Indian art . . . but not Indian art, according to the experts.

Now, when a town appears to have no definite reason for being, no identity with agriculture or mining, or indeed any positive identity with the turpentine industry—it is a mystery unto itself. There is no kind of machinery, vats, etc., such as one sees in turpentine camps in the south.

Given a little knowledge of the past, even the most awed tourist can generally determine the reason for the existence of most ghost towns—gold or silver was discovered there, or the railroad had a spur, or it was a stage stop or fording place on a stream. But not so Trementina.

Was it a farming community? Hardly, because the terrain is formidably rocky, rough, and not at all suited to any type of agriculture. The only indication of a commercial enterprise is the bank, and a

building that appears to have been a store. What was sold there? If there were shelves, they are long gone. There is no evidence of an office where business might have been conducted.

If it was a religious establishment, still there had to be economic support. Even religion can't exist on religion alone—not a whole town of possibly 500 residents.

Trementina's locale is in a setting unique in all New Mexico—at the base of strange-looking mesas peculiar only to this region. There are large mesas topped by tiny ones seemingly to be riding on their backs. It is a truly weird area.

Whenever Trementina was built, and by whom, Las Vegas was old even then, and Santa Fe was really ancient. The big question, then: How could a town of this size have been set up, and operated for many years, without Las Vegas or Santa Fe knowing anything about it? For there are no records of the town's founding in either city, no records of any of its people, nothing about the abandonment of the town. There are several reasons why it became a ghost town: speculatively, an epidemic, economic depression, or the death of religious leaders. But what is the real truth?

If anybody ever comes up with the answer, it will make good reading. □



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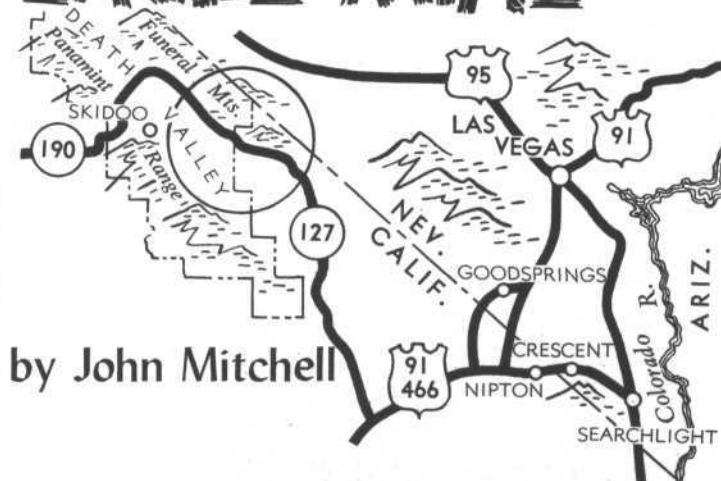
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By reader request DESERT Magazine will reprint a series of articles written by the dean of lost mine yarns, John Mitchell, which appeared originally in 1940 and 1941.

LOST GOLDEN EAGLE MINE



by John Mitchell



T WAS IN the summer of 1902 that Alkali Jones, old time prospector and desert rat set out across the desert from Skidoo, California, to Searchlight,

Nevada. His route lay across one of the hottest and most desolate regions of the United States—Death Valley. For centuries it has been known to the Shoshone Indians as To-me-sha (Ground on fire). Alkali was in a hurry to reach Searchlight and he was traveling with one pack burro. He carried a .22 calibre rifle, a small prospecting pick, five pounds of jerky, five pounds of bacon, some hard-tack, coffee, sugar, salt, a small frying pan, coffee pot and an old army kit. This together with a gallon canteen of water and his bedroll made a total pack load of less than 100 pounds.

Two days after leaving Skidoo, while crossing a narrow arm of the valley, he was caught suddenly in a fierce sand-storm. The sun hung like a copper disk in the darkened sky and the wind whipped the sand dunes into fantastic shapes. Small particles of sand driven by the terrific force of the wind cut like points of steel.

Semi-darkness fell over the face of the earth and as the weary traveler stumbled on through the sand his attention was attracted to a dark object that

loomed only a short distance ahead. Making his way toward it he soon came to the foot of a small butte that stood alone in the desert. At the base of the friendly butte were a number of huge granite boulders. These seemed to offer some shelter from the raging storm so he made camp beside one of them.

When the storm had abated and the sun came out again Jones left his shelter beside the huge granite boulder and in order to get a better view of the surrounding country started to climb toward the summit of the little butte. When about half way up the north side his attention was attracted to some pieces of milky white quartz that lay scattered along the hillside. With the small pick that he carried in his belt he broke several pieces of the quartz and found it to be matted together with large stringers of bright yellow gold!

Running along the side of the hill in a northeasterly and southwesterly direction was a white quartz vein about three feet wide. It outcropped for a distance of about one thousand feet before it disappeared under the sand at the foot of the little granite butte. The vein was a fissure in pink granite and showed free gold wherever it was broken open.

From a pouch he carried in his belt Alkali took a location notice and while

engaged in filling it out he looked up into the sky and saw a huge bird wheeling high overhead. It was so far above him he was unable to tell whether it was an eagle or a huge California Condor that was dogging his footsteps waiting for a chance to pick the meat from his bones. At any rate he called the claim the "Golden Eagle." When he had finished the location notice he signed his name to it and then placed it in an empty tobacco can. Then he gathered up about 10 pounds of the rich white quartz and placed it in a small sample sack. From the loose quartz and rock scattered on the hillside he built a monument and placed the tin can containing the location notice in it.

It was getting late in the afternoon when Jones climbed down from the little butte and headed for the higher mountains to the north. After traveling a distance of about one mile he came to the foot of the mountains and started climbing. When a few thousand feet up he sat down to rest. The map in his pocket showed that he was in the Funeral range sitting on Coffin mountain looking down into Death Valley. And to make things even worse he had only one pint of water left in his canteen.

As he sat there making a crude map of the location of his mine, the valley

below him suddenly filled with water. It danced and sparkled in the evening sunlight as the gentle waves broke into spray against the pink granite butte and the great boulders at its base. Beautiful trees and fairy castles appeared along the shore. Jones, being a man of the desert, knew the lake was only a beautiful mirage that had lured hundreds of less experienced men to a horrible death on the burning sands.

So instead of heading out into the desert waste to search for water, he turned his footsteps toward the Funeral range. When he had traveled a distance of about two miles he came to a deep canyon. Pausing on the brink he looked into the canyon bed far below. As he stood there he saw doves, birds and whitewings in pairs and small flocks flying swiftly up the canyon. This he knew to be a sure sign of water not far away. Climbing down into the deep canyon he continued to walk along its bed for a distance of about a mile and then suddenly came to a large tank that nature had scooped out of the solid bed-rock. It was full of clear water and was surrounded by thousands of quail and other birds. A small bed of sand under a shelving rock in the nearby canyon wall offered an ideal place to camp for the night. Jones could have killed some of the quail or whitewings for his supper, but he did not have the heart to destroy the friends who had saved his life by leading him to their secret watering place. When he had filled himself with jerky, hardtack and coffee he lay down in the warm sand to rest.

Little sleep came to Alkali Jones that night. He lay awake reveling in the dreams of bonanza. The wail of a coyote came up from the desert and owls hooted from the crags above the water-hole. From high up among the rocks a bobcat screamed his challenge across the canyon, but only the echo came back. Jones prepared a breakfast of bacon, hardtack and coffee, and was well on his way down the east side of the Funeral range with his canteen full of fresh water and the 10 pound bag of rich ore clutched in his hand when the first rays of dawn tinted the east and Death Valley was again flooded with golden sunlight.

After leaving the Funeral mountains Jones passed into the Amargosa range and camped the next night on Amargosa river. From there he made his way southeast to Charleston mountain, Good Springs, Crescent and Searchlight. Upon his arrival at Searchlight he took about one pound of the rich quartz and had it assayed. It ran \$41,000 in gold to the

ton. The remaining nine pounds were ground up in a mortar and returned \$180.00 in gold. With the money so obtained Jones purchased three burros from Winfield Sherman, a desert character well known to Crescent and Searchlight. At a store in Searchlight he purchased provisions and mining tools. He then wrote his sister in the east and was ready to return to the Death Valley country to work his mine. While in the mining town of Searchlight Jones took his meals at Jack Wheatley's eating house and it was there that the writer saw the wonderful ore and heard the story direct from Jones' own lips.

Three days later Jones loaded his outfit on two of the burros, mounted the third and set out across the cactus-covered flats in the direction of Crescent peak. That was the last his friends ever saw of him. It was learned later by his sister who came west to search for him, that he spent the night at the Gus Halfpenney gold mine on the west side of Crescent peak and a few days later passed through Good Springs headed for the Death Valley country.

The years passed and no word of Alkali Jones or his Golden Eagle mine ever came out of the desert. Then, one day two old Shoshone Indians making their way across the desert along the east side of the Funeral range came upon the scattered remnants of a weathered pack outfit under a large mesquite tree. Scattered in the sand were some old rusty mining tools, but the body of Jones was nowhere to be found. He is believed to have run out of water somewhere on the desert between the Amargosa river and the eastern foothills of the Funeral range and to have started out on foot to find the tank of the friendly birds where he had camped only a few weeks before. Either he met with some accident or was overtaken by those twin demons of the desert—heat and thirst. The burros no doubt eventually joined the wild herds which roam that region.

Jones' Golden Eagle mine may have met the fate which is known to have overtaken more than one rich deposit in the Death Valley region, where winds of hurricane velocity sweep across the desert at certain seasons of the year. These winds carry great volumes of sand and may pile up a drift many feet in depth within a week's time.

But the same wind which often covers rich ore deposits may sooner or later expose them to view again, and there is always the possibility that a prospector may come upon a rich claim in a region previously trod by other gold-seekers. □

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Bottle Booty

by Frank Taylor



AS THE urge to collect old bottles reaches a feverish pitch, hundreds of back country travelers turn their four-wheelers off the highways to search for these once-abandoned curios. One weary hobbyist said recently, "I know more about the dumps in Esmeralda and Au-

rorra than I know about my own neighbors!"

Almost every town dump has been patiently dug up and for the person just starting to hunt, there is little to find. But two men have been astonishingly successful at re-working sites thought to be exhausted. They have become so expert, in fact, that collectors call them the Bottle

Twins and accuse them of having a golden shovel. In the past 13 years, the pair has dug up nearly 3000 bottles.

The brothers, Bart and Harold Reuck, don't think luck has much to do with their success. "It's just hard work," Bart smiles. Like any other novice, the pair started out hunting for bottles that could be easily found. During their first six months, they found only three bottles. Then they changed their tactics and returned to the first town where they had dug. In this location a weekend of work hadn't yielded a single bottle the first time. On their second trip the boys found 19 rare bottles and containers. Success came after the two decided to dig a trench six feet deep across the top of what was thought to be an empty dump. Since then, the Reuck twins have worked bottle digging down to a science and have evolved a system to eliminate hours of fruitless work in the wrong spots.

Now when they arrive at a prospective site, they walk over it back and forth in a grid pattern searching every foot of land where they expect to dig. This visual survey helps them select the best spot to begin operations. Then they dig a few test holes to check for cans and shards of glass and pottery before beginning to work in earnest.

"There is no use digging where you find nothing but dirt," Bart explained. "Unless there is other junk mixed in the soil, you are wasting your time. What you have to find for good bottle hunting is a former out-house hole, a garbage pit or a dump. Find that and you will find bottles."

Once they have found something, they have continued to dig down as far as 10 feet. Their best luck occurred on an occasion when they accidentally stumbled upon a privy site and turned up a number of bottles. The next weekend they returned to finish the hole and then wondered where to start next. In pacing around, Harold noticed another likely spot 50 feet away. It turned out to be an-



Children discover the fun of running along an old board sidewalk. The ground beneath old sidewalks usually is rich with curios and rare bottles.

other privy site. Before they finished in the area, weeks later, the brothers had found nine more, each 50 feet apart. It had been a row of miner's cabins, each with its own privy and garbage dump.

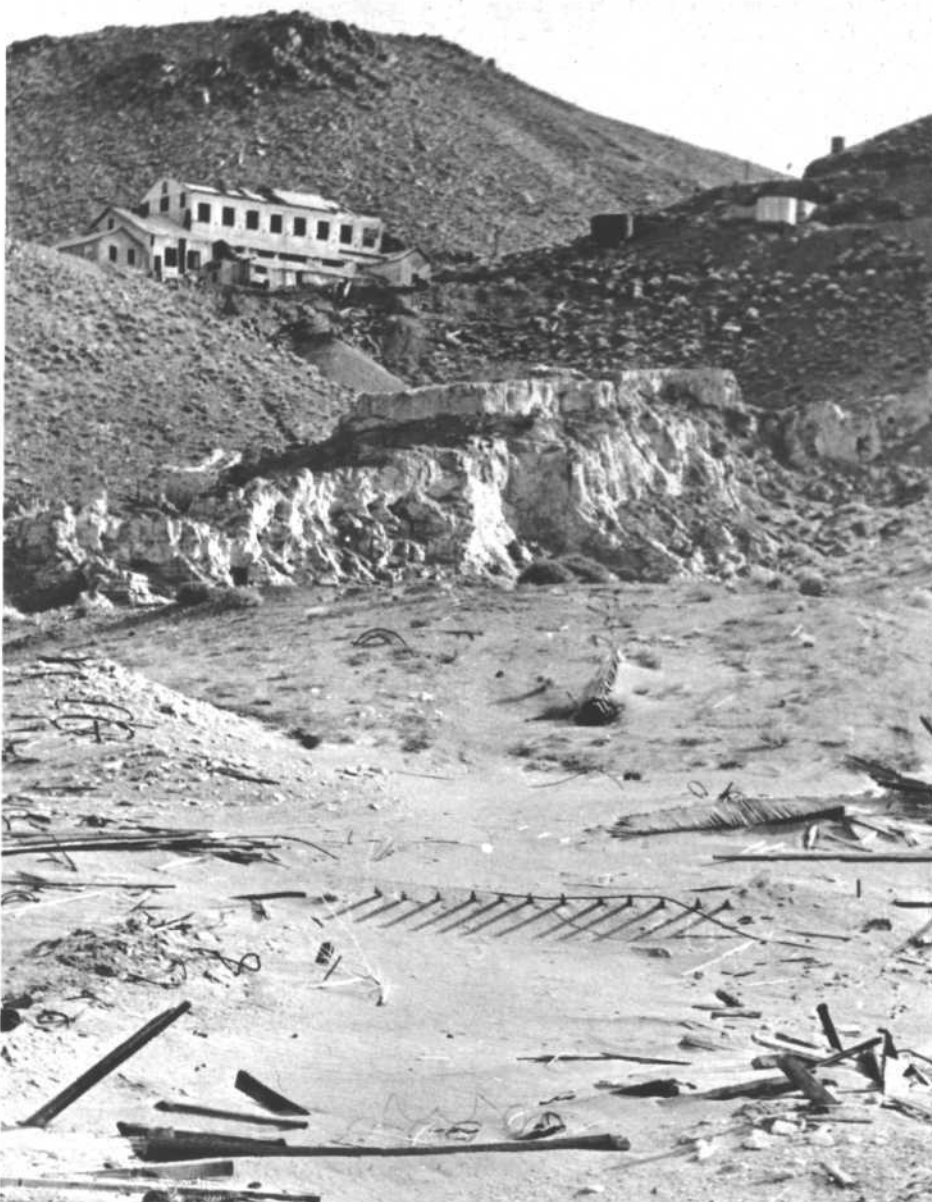
Not all of their digging is done in pits. Other favorite spots are under sidewalks where the boards have rotted away and inside old building shells. The sidewalks are worked by trenches and a number of gold coins have been found this way. Other curios have included a watch, buttons, belt buckles and rusted shovels.

The twins dig bottles for fun. They never sell what they discover, although they occasionally trade for a bottle to fill out their collection. When they aren't searching for new specimens, the twins are cleaning up and cataloguing the ones they have. This can consume as much time as the hunting.

A hazard the twins have encountered is the shattering of bottles when sunlight hits them for the first time in 50 odd years. This is because old glass is often very thin and chilled by the cold earth and abrupt warmth causes them to expand and crack. Now the twins warm each one in their hands before taking it out of the pit.

When asked if all the old bottles might be recovered within a few years, Bart remarked that they have returned to sites they had worked several times and after each new rain storm, more bottles appear.

The need to find discarded bottles and junk of former generations is a strange one, but as long as they are able, the Reuck twins intend to keep shoveling. "Antique bottles are about the only things left in these old ghost towns," Bart said, "except for the ghosts." □



The Reuck brothers believe the dump below the Yellow Aster mine at Randsburg, Calif. will yield a rich harvest of curios and bottles to anyone willing to dig for them.

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SELDOM SEEN – EXCEPT IN BALLARAT BY FLORINE LAWLOR



PANAMINT Valley, some say, is a small replica of its big sister, Death Valley. Its scenery isn't quite as vast, its views not as spectacular, the colors are more subdued. The area is much smaller and its tourist drawing cards fall short, but Panamint Valley claims "Seldom Seen Slim," who overshadows many of the attractions of Death Valley.

Seldom Seen Slim lives alone in the decaying ghost town of Ballarat. Slim, as he likes to be called, is everything his name implies. This gaunt lean man of some 80 years has made Ballarat his home for more than 45 years, with only the animals of the desert for neighbors. But

ask him if he ever regretted this lonely existence and his reply would be, "Nope if I had it to do over again, I wouldn't change an hour."

Slim was born Charles Ferge, in Indiana, and spent his boyhood there until 1905 when the lure of gold out West carried him to Nevada. After roaming the state in his quest for riches, he found only enough to finance the next prospecting trip, which finally carried him into California's Mother Lode country.

By 1922 he had worked his way south into Death Valley. Here Slim met and formed an alliance with Shorty Harris. Together they are credited with more strikes than all the other Death Valley prospectors put together—Skidoo, Bull-

frog, Harrisburg, the World Beater, The Elephant and Golden Girl, just to name a few.

Together these two could have hewn an empire, but material things seemed to matter not at all to them and as one boom town after another erupted, Shorty and Slim loaded their burros and headed for the hills.

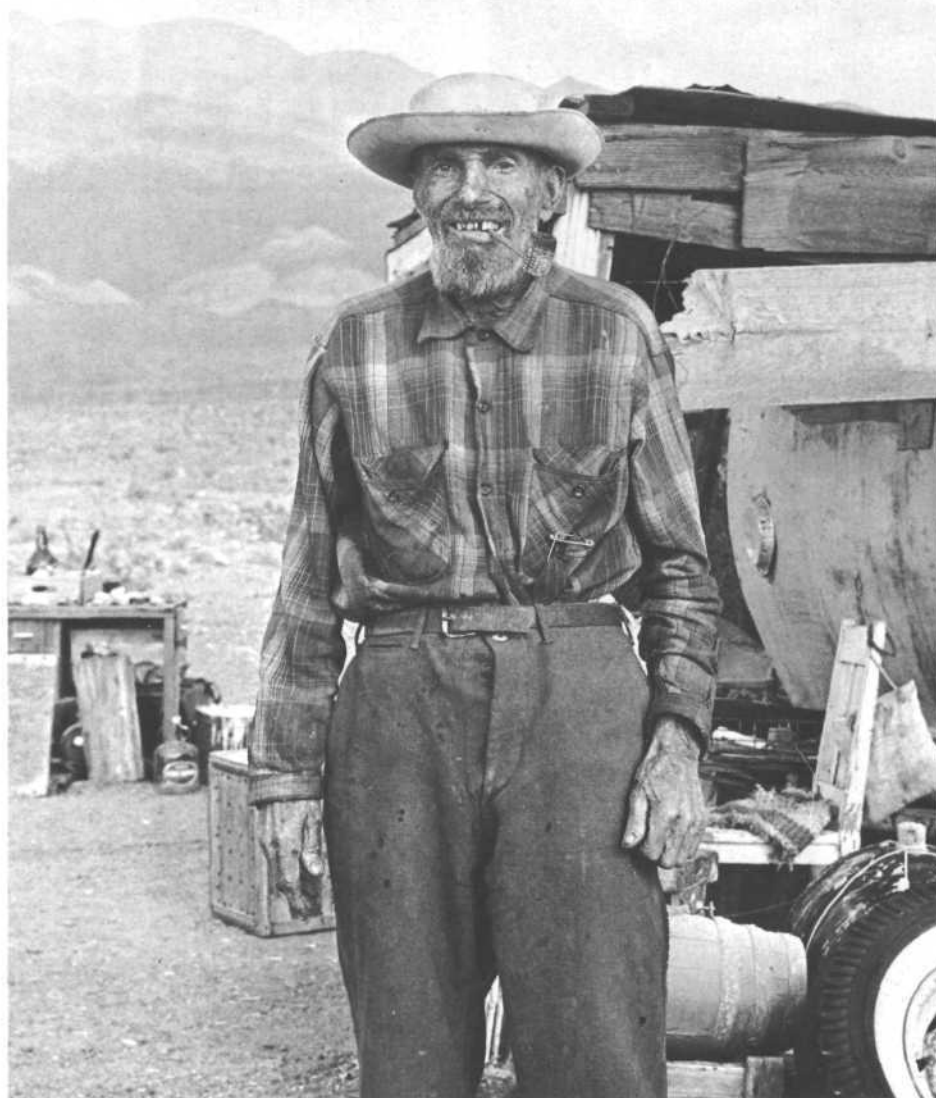
On one of their ventures they teamed up with Pete Aguerreberry, a soft spoken Basque for whom Aguerreberry Point was named. Slim soon decided, though, that three was a crowd, so went on his own again.

In the ensuing years the Keane Wonder mine was discovered and the ore was rich; so rich, in fact, that prospectors came from all over the Valley to stake claims near it. Slim was one of them. When his claim proved fruitless he worked in the Keane mill to earn enough to be on his way again. As time went on he strayed less and less from Ballarat, his camp, working his claims in the flanks of the nearby Panamints to eke out a bare living. As Slim says, "the desert just grewed on him." In Ballarat he maintains Boot Hill, a tiny cemetery where he has buried many a friend. The graves are covered with wild flowers and stones and marked with epitaphs carved by Slim, but the names on them are obliterated by the elements.

Slim took us on a tour of his City, pointing out the adobe ruins where Shorty Harris had lived, the crumbling school house, a grocery store, a saloon and one of hell-raising Ballarat's erstwhile bordellos. He showed us the road to Panamint City, "six miles straight up."

We spent hours pouring over his age-worn photos of all the Death Valley greats and his rock collection, unequalled anywhere. While we drank cup after cup of black coffee, Slim recalled the past, puffed on his beloved corn cob pipe and inquired about Las Vegas. He had "heard it grewed" since he visited there in 1912. We assured him it had and invited him to come back with us and visit for a few days, but he declined our invitation, saying he didn't want to leave his peace and quiet.

The day we spent with Seldom Seen Slim flew all too fast. As we drove away, we looked back. A proud giant of the past raised his arm and waved. □



Seldom Seen Slim pauses for a visit with Death Valley wanderers.

Parker... a fun-tastic Playland



ANY OF THE refinements of the large metropolitan areas of the West are not to be found in Parker, Arizona. Visitors from major cities sometimes

have difficulty adjusting to the non-smog atmosphere; lovers of snow and slush are disappointed by the lack of them here; tornado and flood enthusiasts watch the sky in vain; and urbanites are frustrated over the absence of traffic jams during the rush hour.

Parker is a desert town with a big, blue, wonderful river—a river that saw the Spaniard, Alarcon, floating downstream in 1540 and Father Garces coming up in 1776, and steamboats that brought soldiers and miners and supplies to the towns along its length. Parker was established in 1908 to provide a shipping and trading center for the Colorado River Indian Reservation. It is a small piece of private property carved out of the northern end of the Reservation that straddles the river for 50 miles to a point just above Blythe, California.

The Colorado River is at least 1400 miles long, but the 17-mile stretch be-

tween Parker Dam and the town of Parker has been called the most beautiful section of all. It includes Lake Moovalya (Blue Waters, in Indian language) which was formed by the construction of Headgate Rock Dam, a few miles above Parker. Along this wide, deep channel are gay waterfront resorts, motels, trailer parks, cabanas, marinas, homes, and swim and ski beaches. On the Arizona side of the lake (or wide portion of the river) the area is popularly known as the 11-mile strip.

There are two seasons on the Colorado River. The winter season is popular with those making the area their winter home. Then the climate is perfect for rock hounding, hiking, or just relaxing while fishing for lunker bass and catfish. Crappie, blue-gill, trout, and sunfish are also caught in abundance. Hunting possibilities include quail, whitewings, dove, duck, and desert bighorn sheep. In summer months the river here is most popular with the boating and water skiing contingent.

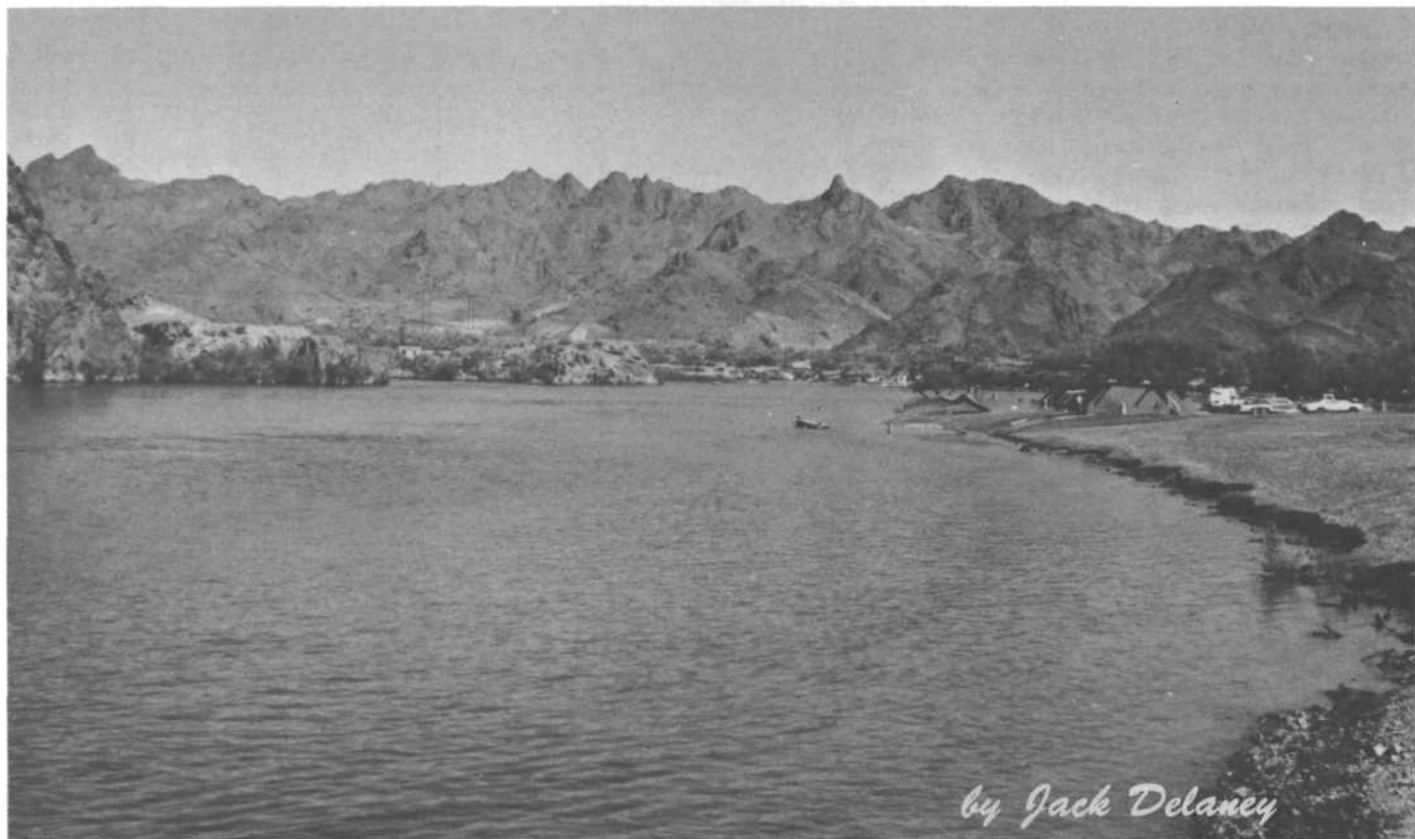
This stretch of the Colorado River is called the fastest water in the West because speed records have been broken here seven times since 1960. More than

25 racing events are held between Parker Dam and Headgate Rock Dam annually during the season which runs from early March to Thanksgiving Day. As a spectator, you may watch the action from the shore, fancy cabanas, resorts, or from restaurant windows while you sip a tall lemonade—or something. You'll also enjoy the exhibition of water skiing—sleek, slim speedboats towing sleek, slim water skiers is a thrilling sight.

The best known of these events, sometimes called the "destruction derby" of boat racing, is the Parker 9-hour Enduro, usually held early in March. This is the biggest, fastest, toughest endurance race in the United States. More than a hundred participants roar up and down the river for nine hours at speeds exceeding 90 miles per hour. The marathon starts with the boats dead in the water and drivers lined up 50 yards away. When the starting gun sounds, the drivers race to their boats and the nine-hour grind begins. It starts and ends at the Blue Water Marine Park (a Colorado River Indian Tribes project).

Another highlight of the racing season is the occasional running of drag

Colorado River at Buckskin Park.



by Jack Delaney



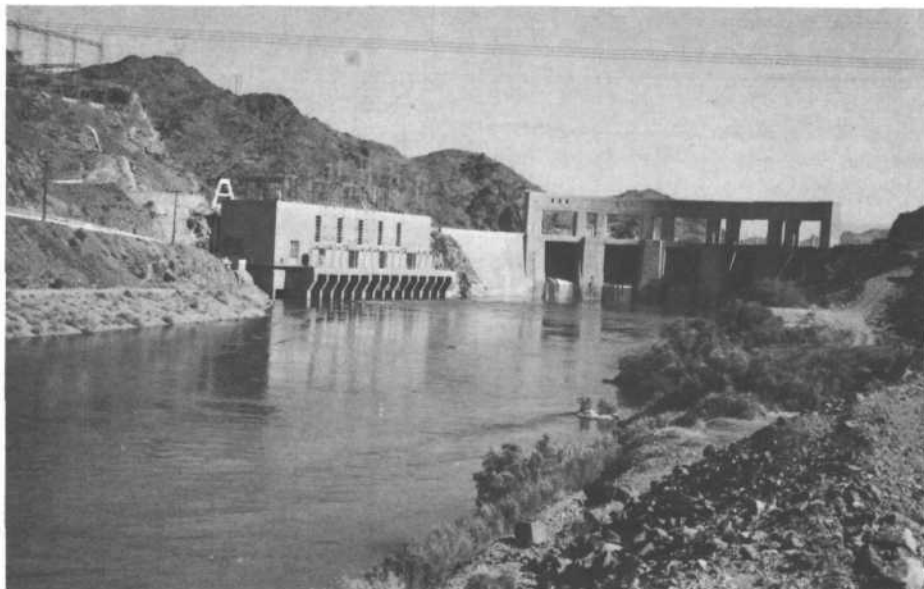
ances, in which about 75 boats participate. Top speeds in these events are in the 120 and 130 miles per hour class. It was during a drag race here that Howard Brown set the *upside down and backwards* record. He went through the electric timer upside down and backwards at 90 miles per hour!

In order to avoid giving the impression that this is strictly a nautical racetrack, dominated by high-powered speedboat jockeys and supercharged water skiers, it should be stated that these sports enthusiasts are only a part of the attraction of the 11-mile strip. This is really a land of leisure—casual and carefree. The common mode of dress is swim and beach wear—people here *undress* to go out! Gals in bikinis are much in evidence. (Could they be anything else in bikinis?)

Entire families spend hours each day in their "gasoline gondolas," cruising, visiting friends, and stopping occasionally for soft drinks, sandwiches, and a bit of leg-stretching. In the evening a unique experience is to travel by water to a resort restaurant along the shore to enjoy a steak dinner. After docking the boat, the routine is cocktails, sociability, and do-it-yourself barbecuing. Al fresco dining is very popular here and the cost is reasonable. A top sirloin steak with all of the trimmings can be enjoyed for about \$2.00 in some places.

The river is such a vital part of living here that when I drove up to a place of business, seeking directions to Lake Havasu City, I was asked, "By water or by road?" It was interesting that, had I planned to go by boat, there would be no problem. But by automobile, the opinion was that I just couldn't get there

*Colorado River below Parker Dam.
Parker Dam and power plant.*



from here! Frankly, I didn't even try to get there from here—the 11-mile strip offered a full measure of fun, so why go anywhere else?

For a "history" break it is suggested you break from the "strip" to visit the town of Earp and Parker Dam. Earp is a tiny community on the California side of the river across from Parker, Arizona. It might be called a mini-town, excepting that the prefix "mini" today carries the connotation of something brief and seductive. Earp is brief, but by no stretch of the imagination could it be called seductive.

This town consists of a grocery, motel, trailer park, gas station, trading post, post office, and a few homes. Should it appear that Earp was out of step in the

march of progress, let's assume that it purposely saved a slice of early Western atmosphere for present-day tourists to enjoy. It is here that the famous Westerner, Wyatt Earp, settled for a few years in the 1880s. His old shack and corral are still standing, much to the delight of shutterbugs seeking to record relics of the past.

It appears that Mr. Earp's reputation is subject to question. Some think of him as having been a hero, a frontier marshal and prospector; while other have branded him as anything from a fast gun opportunist to a downright renegade. The residents are inclined to consider the town's name, honoring that old Western character, with levity. Some even doubt that Earp's home was built here originally, believing that it must have been moved here from the shore of the Colorado river where he spent so much time. However, this is where it is and can be seen and photographed now.

For a quick transition from the past to present, drive 17 miles north to Parker Dam. This is a concrete, variable radius arch structure. It is one of a series of dams on the lower Colorado River that has transformed it from an unruly river to a useful servant. Parker's purpose is to provide municipal and industrial water to California coastal cities, principally Los Angeles and San Diego, via the Colorado River Aqueduct. The dam was completed in 1938; first delivery of river water to the Los Angeles area was made in 1941; and benefits of the system were extended to San Diego in 1947.

Dams, like famous bridges, always have at least one dimension that qualifies them for the "world's greatest" category—

they are the tallest, the widest, the costliest, the most beautiful, etc. Parker Dam is the deepest dam in the world! Two-thirds of its structural height is below river bed. Men and machines excavated 235 feet before placing the dam's concrete foundation. Only 85 feet of its bulk protrudes above the bed of the Colorado River. Parker's superstructure rises another 63 feet above the roadway that crosses its top, connecting Arizona and California.

Every area can boast of an attraction or two that could be classed as a "must see" for visitors. The 11-mile strip above the town of Parker is no exception. One of its outstanding attractions is the new Buckskin Mountain State Park which opened only a few months ago. It includes a beautiful stretch of river front almost completely hidden from the highway. At the park sign, turn onto a narrow entrance road, drive around an interesting red rock hill, and suddenly an inspiring sight appears. You almost expect someone to call out, "Surprise!"

The Administrative building is on the right of the entrance and the Interpretive Center, extending over the water, is to the left. Farther ahead are the cabanas along the river's edge, picnic areas, barbecues, swimming beach, camp sites, and facilities for boat launching and docking. The grounds are beautifully landscaped with green lawns and fast growing shade trees. Plans call for a museum in the near future.

All cabanas and camp sites have electric outlets and the park has adequate sanitary facilities. The public is welcome to use the launching ramp, picnic area and Interpretive Center free of charge.

The rate for overnight camping, including bathhouse privileges, is \$1.50 per day. Cabanas rent for \$5.00 per day for up to five adults, and \$1.00 per day for each additional person over 12 years of age. You may be pleased to learn that dogs are permitted here provided they are well-mannered and kept on a leash.

Indian culture has been a part of Arizona for many years, with one-quarter of the state's area in reservation land. A seventh of the Indian population of the United States lives on the 19 reservations in this state. One out of every 20 persons in Arizona is Indian. In classifying various groups into the haves and the have-nots, the quartet of tribes in the Colorado River Reservation should be included with the haves. Here, Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi, and Navajo Indians live in harmony under the watchful eye of a progressive tribal council.

The Indians realize income from leases on a portion of their 264,000 acres of riverfront land, and have poured their money into tribal enterprises—a new administrative building, a library and museum, a half-million dollar gymnasium and recreation center, education, housing, and tribal welfare. Visitors are welcome on the reservation and at the new tribal headquarters near Parker. Hunters and fishermen are asked to obtain entry permits as well as state licenses. Inquiries on fishing and hunting should be directed to Colorado River Indian Tribes, Parker, Arizona. Tribal chairman, Dempsey Scott, will see that you receive the desired information promptly.

Whether you are planning a short trip or an extended vacation, the sun never sets on recreation at Parker. □



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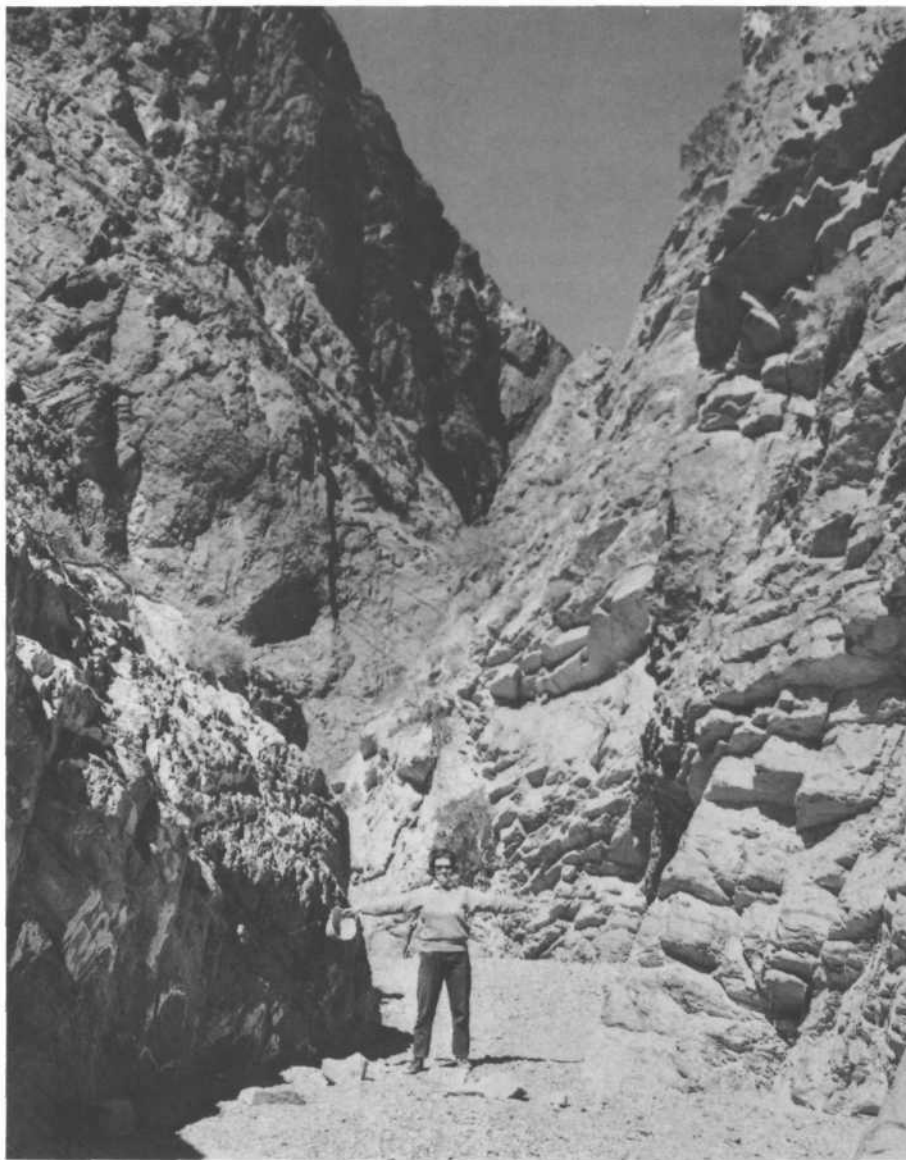
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Exploring Cottonwood Canyon

by Roger Mitchell



The Marble Canyon Narrows.



EATH Valley, as everyone knows, is as hot and dry and desolate as a place can be. Yet there is a paradox, for amid the sun-bleached sands flow rivers of sparkling water lined with greenery. One such spot lies hidden in the Cottonwood Mountains, a few miles west of Stove Pipe Wells Resort on Highway 190.

Here, in Cottonwood Canyon, a rare desert stream is forced to the surface by layers of bedrock. In its brief life of only a few miles, the stream supports a small forest of Cottonwood trees and an untold population of native wildlife. Although little-known and seldom visited today, this was once the home of Piutes and earlier tribesmen. Evidence of their occupancy is chipped in the rock walls of the canyon.

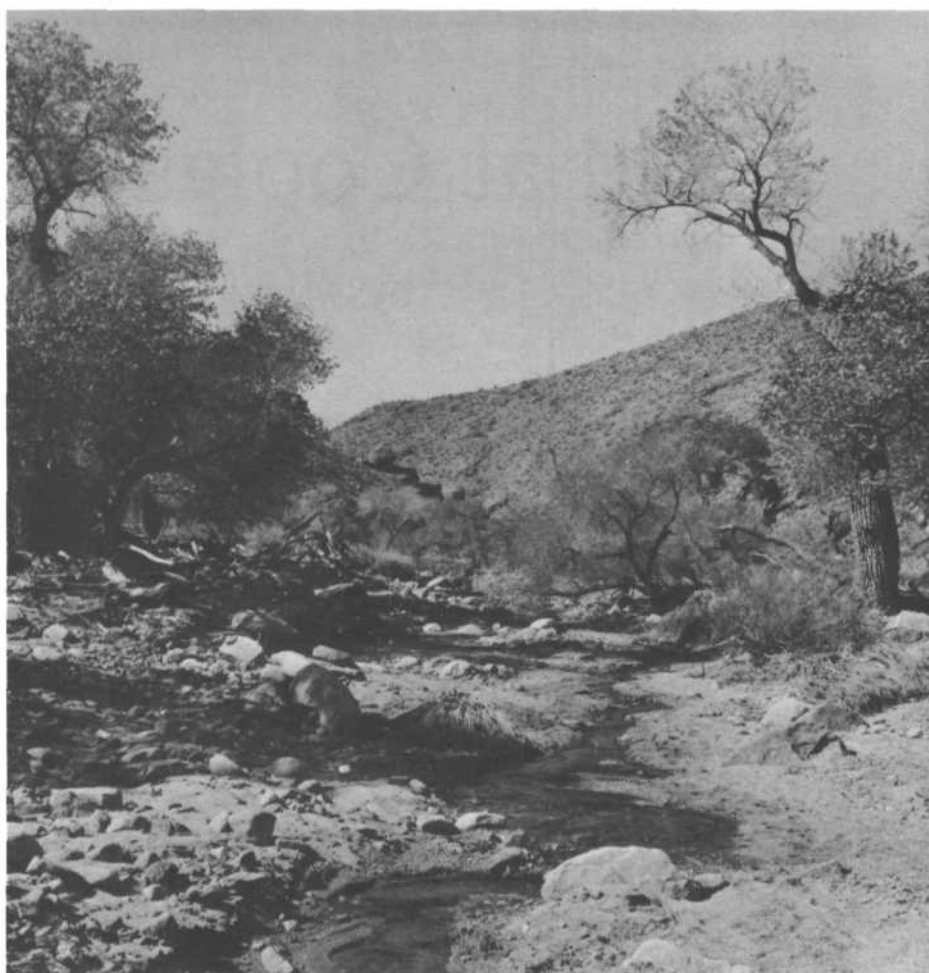
Exploration of this isolated region is not easy. Miles of soft sand and large boulders make it impossible to get very far in a standard automobile. Vehicles with high centers and four-wheel drive have the least difficulty. The route is rough but rewarding.

Across the highway from the Stove Pipe Wells Hotel, a National Park Service sign reads "Jeep Road, Cottonwood and Marble Canyons." The desert road heads in a westerly direction across the valley floor. After traveling a distance of 5.2 miles from Stove Pipe Wells, the road forks. Take the right fork and within three miles you will enter a gorge cut from the massive wall of the mountain face. This is the entrance to Cottonwood Canyon and the door to the secrets it holds.

Upon entering the canyon the road ceases to exist. Start up the wash carefully, making your way over, around, and between the numerous boulders. If you're lucky, there may be the faint tracks of a previous visitor to guide you. As you enter the canyon look for a display of faint petroglyphs on the northern wall. Those on the south side appear suspiciously fresh.

As soon as you get accustomed to the confining walls, the canyon opens onto a large flat and an old sign, overlooked by vandals' bullets, marks a fork in the canyon. To the right is Marble Canyon and Goldbelt Spring, some 14 miles to the west. Backcountry vehicles can turn to the right here and continue for a couple of miles more. Shortly after entering Marble Canyon, however, a narrow spot stops the wider vehicles and, within another mile, all vehicles are stopped by a huge boulder wedged into the bottom of the canyon. This should not stop hikers, though, as Marble Canyon has much to offer in the way of scenery and petroglyphs.

To see Cottonwood Canyon, keep left at the sign and continue up the main wash in a southerly direction. Soon the vertical walls of highly metamorphosed limestone will once again enclose the



Cottonwood Canyon.

The cave in Cottonwood Canyon.

Cottonwood Creek.



main wash. At a point four miles above the sign, look for a large cave hollowed out of thick layers of sandstone. It is difficult to estimate the age of this cave, but it seems reasonable to assume that it provided shelter for the more recent Indians who lived and farmed in the canyon.

A mile beyond the cave, a secondary canyon enters from the right. Vehicular travel up this side canyon ends at a small prospect hole. It is easy to confuse this side canyon with the main canyon, so upon leaving the cave, remember to keep to the left when the canyon forks. Three miles beyond this fork, the passable section of

Cottonwood Canyon will end on top of a debris of boulders and tree trunks. Here is the unexpected—a rare desert stream in a cottonwood grove! The "road" going up the canyon and the stream coming down the canyon meet and end at the same place. Here Cottonwood Creek slowly sinks again until it has percolated down to the very floor of Death Valley.

After traveling this far, a hike up the stream bed almost seems mandatory. It is a pleasant two mile hike up the canyon to Cottonwood Springs, the source of the creek. Somewhere along this two-mile route you may see a herd of wild burros grazing along the stream or upon the hill-

side. Few of these animals have ever been domesticated, owing their existence to their ancestors who broke loose from a prospector. Over the years these strays have banded together in herds and multiplied. Today there are a surprising number of these wild burros, particularly in the Inyo County-Death Valley area.

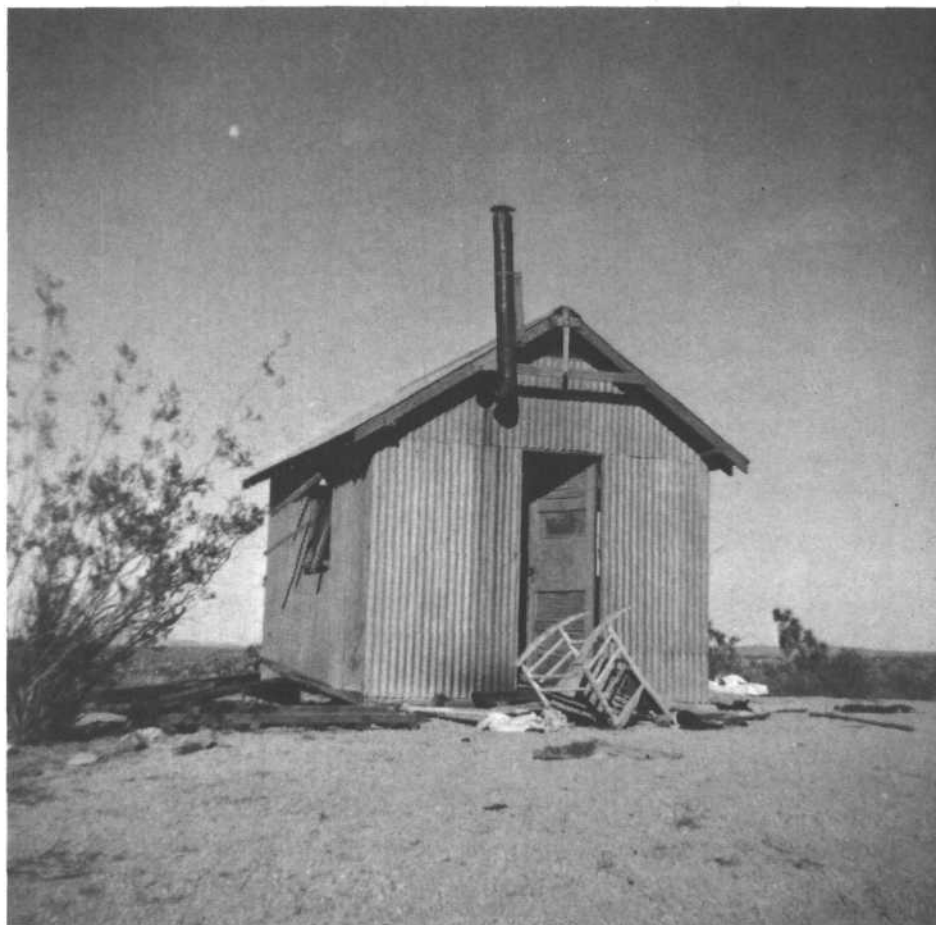
As you hike up the stream, watch the moist soil along the stream bed for various kinds of tracks. Other less conspicuous inhabitants of the canyon include numerous kinds of small rodents, rabbits, foxes, and, of course, the ubiquitous coyote. Keep your eye on the high ridges, too, because the desert bighorn has been seen in the canyon.

Of all the natural history buffs, the bird watchers will probably find Cottonwood Canyon the most fascinating. At practically any time of the year, the huge, spreading cottonwoods are alive with flutter and songs of various birds. Here, where the normally quiet desert is so noisy, nature seems suddenly "unbalanced."

Whether you spend a day or a week in Cottonwood Canyon, you will find the trip, rough as it is, both rewarding and interesting. □

Gold at Coolgardie Today

by Myrtle Teague



WE STOPPED our jeep amid utter desolation. The ground, upturned as from a farmer's plow, stretched out like a blanket of silence around a long-forgotten cabin constructed of sheet metal. Old mining towns always excite me. I could almost see the hustle and bustle when this town called Coolgardie boomed because a lucky miner had made a rich strike. I could also visualize the hardship its people endured in order to survive on desert land where each drop of water had to be hauled in or obtained from a community well.

To reach this deserted, almost forgot-

ten mining camp, follow the Camp Irwin road from Barstow, California. At Copper City, turn left and travel the short distance to the bullet-riddled sign at the Coolgardie turnoff. There you will find a nice camping spot under some Joshua trees about a mile from town.

The upheaval of the earth at this site was an enigma. We had never seen placer gold in dirt like this. Tempted to try our own luck, we unloaded our metal detector, shovel, gold pans and 15-gallon water can beside the cabin built of sheet metal. Once it had been well cared for, but now the door hung open, windows were broken and debris lay scattered over the floor's old hand-braided rug. A rock-

ing chair still held a place of honor and the room's walls once had been covered with cardboard and painted white. Even in this arid, isolated environment, people of pride had tried to create comfort and beauty within their walls. To the rear of the cabin, where the ground had been dug up for several hundred feet, we took a few samples of dirt which produced a small amount of color, but not enough to make a man rich.

For a week we combed the old camp from one end to the other, browsing through all of the tumble-down shacks, trash dumps and mounds of tailings where oldtimers had spent hours in back-breaking labor. We found an old shaft in which someone had lived. The tunnel contained a bed, table, cabinet and stove, with its pipe leading out through the top of the tunnel. Rats had made nests here and there and the place depressed us.

At the north end of town an old man was mining with a dry washer. His homemade camper was rigged with a wood stove for heat and he was having trouble with his stove pipe because the wind blew the smoke back inside the camper. He had been camped there for several weeks, slowly combing the grounds for a hot spot of gold that he was sure had been overlooked by early miners. So far he hadn't found it, but he did say that he had dry-washed enough gold to buy a two weeks supply of groceries.

A few shacks still stand in Coolgardie and could be restored very easily. There is still gold in the ground; we sampled several old placers and found colors in every pan full. Without a dry washer, however, we had to do it the hard way by carrying our can of water in the jeep and using an abandoned wash tub for our panning operation. We couldn't use as much water as we would have liked, so our gold mining lacked much in technique. But there is gold still to be found at Coolgardie. Only the hot spot remains to be found. □

Secret Under the Dunes

by Ida Smith



OMEWHERE, NOT far from the old Camino del Diablo (the Devil's Highway) along the border between Arizona and Mexico, the remains of an old Spanish mission lie buried beneath shifting sand dunes.

For 200 or more years illusive stories of a lost mission have been told by prospectors who chanced to wander near the spot when desert winds had uncovered a part of it. Later, upon returning, the drifting sands had again covered both mission and landmarks. The prospectors were never able to relocate the spot.

It is said that at one time, while translating an old Spanish document, a research worker at the University of Arizona discovered an account of a Spanish mission built some 200 years ago by the Franciscans somewhere along the old Camino del Diablo. The story was followed up by search parties, but no trace of the mission was found. The document named the mission, *Mision de los Quatros Evangelistas* (Mission of the Four Evangelists).

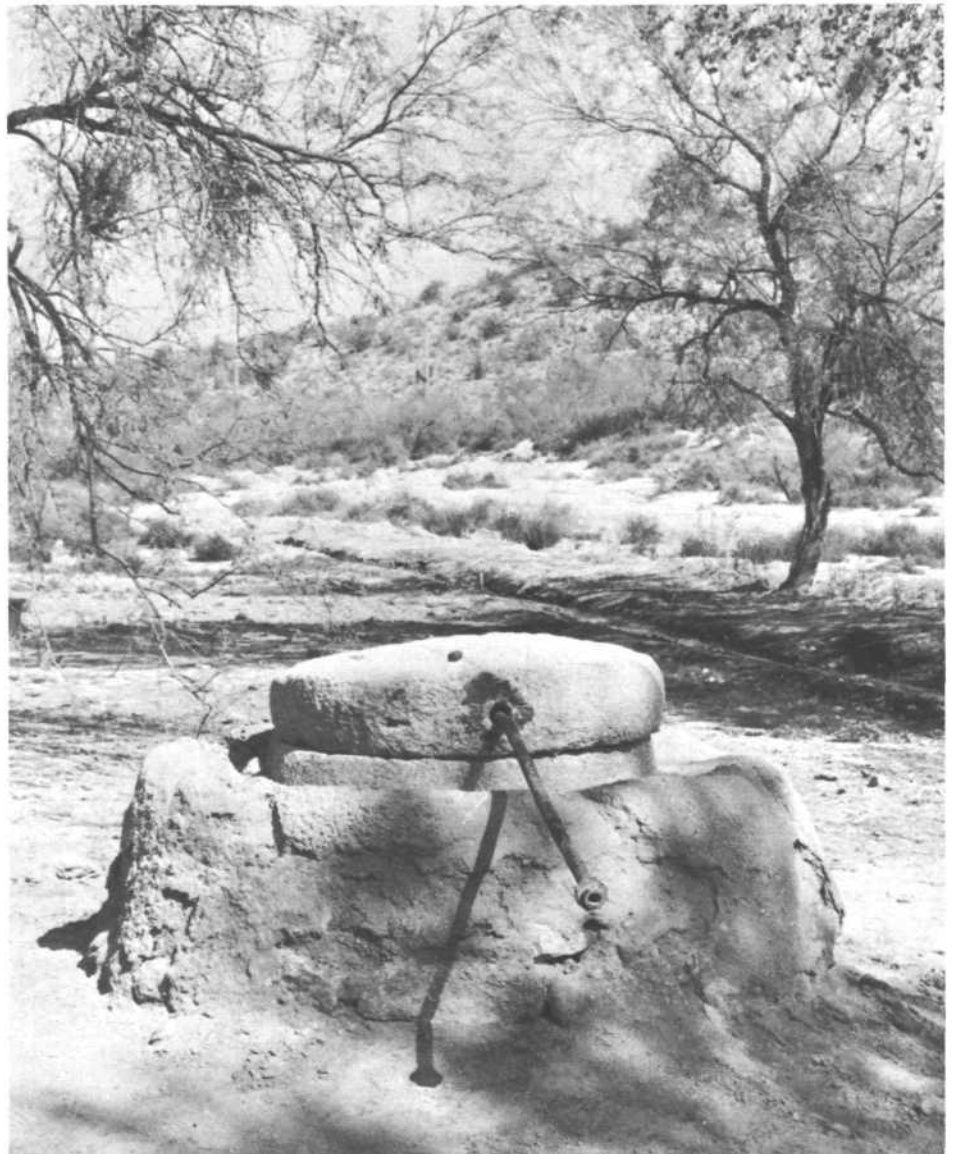
The stories of the lost mission center around a section of desert between the Colorado river in Sonora State, Mexico, and Tinajas Altas across the border in Arizona. It is said that the spot where the mission was built was once an oasis with a good spring and was settled by the Sand Papago Indians. A range of low mountains had for generations protected the spot.

Do the stories of the lost mission all refer to the same mission? Was it the *Mision de los Quatros Evangelistas*, or another? In 1936 a strange account was given to Ben Humphreys, a prospector from Cashion, Arizona, by Donaciano Garcia, a Mexican dry placer miner. Among a number of lost mine stories Garcia told Humphreys was one about a mission buried in the Yuma desert. Humphreys had occasion to recall it when the two of them, journeying into the Muggins Mountains north of Wellton in search of placer locations, met a

prospector who told them that a group of Spaniards, financed by a woman from Spain, had been in the area searching for the lost mission. Their reconnaissance, by both ground and air, had proved fruitless. This led Humphreys to wonder if the Spaniards had evidence that the mission contained wealth that had never reached the coffers of Spain.

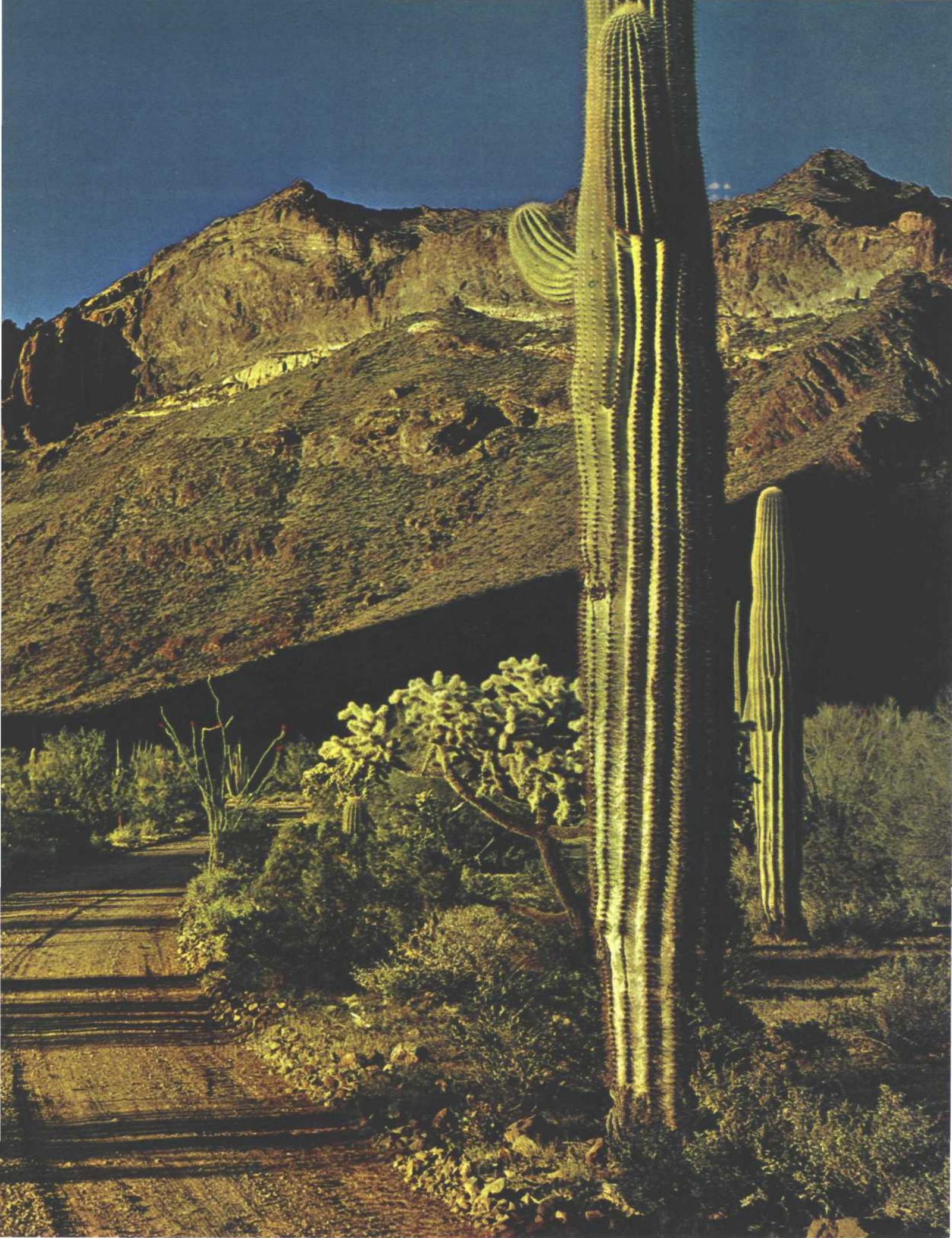
A year later, in 1937, Humphreys

again made a trip to the old Camino del Diablo; this time accompanied by a prospecting partner named Claude Croker as well as Donaciano Garcia. They went by way of Tinajas Altas, a series of seven natural "tanks" or depressions which extend up a mountainside. "The top tank always contains water," said Garcia, "even during the dry season. Many an early traveler perished from thirst because he did not climb high enough." It was



Old grinding mill at Quitobaquito where early Papago Indians ground their meal.





because of such tragedies the old highway became known as the "Devil's Highway."

Humphrey and his party camped for a week or more in the vicinities of Tule Wells, Las Playas, O'Neil's Pass, and Papago Well; places all listed on an early map. While camped where the road forks off the Devil's Highway toward Bates Well, they discovered that their water was running low so they decided to go to Quitobaquito Springs, six miles along the Devil's Highway, to replenish it.

About a mile from their camp they met an old Papago Indian who was wearing a cowboy outfit and riding a sleek horse with a fine saddle. His name was Juan Orosco and he lived at Quitobaquito, where he owned a cattle ranch with grazing and water rights on both the Arizona and Mexico sides of the border. He was a very influential man in his tribe.

mentioned the rumors he had heard of the lost mission, knowing better than to ask an Indian a direct question. After a pause, Orosco said, "It is covered by sand dunes in the middle of a vast waste of sand." Then Orosco told Ben the following story:

"When I was a lad of about 15 my people lived along the Colorado river. One night a white man came to our village. We put him up for the night. During the night he stole one of our horses and left. We followed his tracks toward Tinajas Altas, but lost them out in the desert where the wind had covered them with sand. We decided to go on to Tinajas Altas for water. In that desert waste we came across the top of a belfry among the sand dunes—the belfry of an old Spanish mission long buried under the desert sands. The winds had uncovered

"Then the 'mountains' that had protected our village began to disintegrate and blow away, probably due to drouth and heavy winds. They had been huge sand dunes held together by moisture and vegetation for an unknown time. The sand began to drift so deeply across our village that most of my people migrated to the Colorado river. It was clear that the mission would soon have to be abandoned.

"There were three padres at the mission during the last days there, and two Papagos who remained faithful to them. They packed what they could carry and headed for Tinajas Altas, El Camino del Diablo and the road to Mexico.

"When my people discovered that they had taken all the gold, they went after them. At Tinajas Altas they overtook and fought the Spanish padres and their two Papago followers. In the skirmish, the two Papagos were killed, but the fighting continued and on the third day the Spaniards were all killed.

"A search revealed a freshly dug grave where apparently our fellow tribesmen had been buried during the night. There was no trace of the gold, so my people were sure that it had been buried beneath the two dead Papagos. The padres knew that our people would not disturb their last resting place and the gold would be safe until someday they could return for it."

There was a moment of silence after Jose Orosco finished his story. "The gold," he said, "came from the earth, and has gone back to the earth to be guarded by the spirits of our people."

Somewhere in the desert, in the vicinity of Tinajas Altas, lies the buried treasure of the lost mission. And somewhere in the surrounding desert the winds whip the drifting sands hither and yon across the secret place where the old mission lies buried. After a rainy season the sand dunes are covered with desert verbenas that fill the air with a delicate fragrance, as if nature were apologizing for man's pathetic mistakes.

For many years Quitobaquito Springs was the settlement of the Sand Papago Indians, who had moved there from the Colorado river, but later years it also became a watering place for travelers.

When Jose Juan Orosco died a number of years ago, he left his holdings to his son, Jim, who maintained ranch headquarters at Quitobaquito until the United States government bought him out and converted the beautiful little oasis into a part of the famed Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. □



Quitobaquito Lake has been fed by springs for many centuries.

Humphreys, who as a youth lived in Mexico and learned the language, was able to converse with Jose Orosco. After exchanging pleasantries, Orosco gave them permission to replenish their water at one of his wells, marked on the map as Cipriano's Well, on the Bates Well road. Two years later they met again at an Indian camp west of Avondale, Arizona. This time Orosco was driving a pickup truck and had several younger Papagos with him.

Orosco was interested in hearing about Humphreys' prospecting ventures. After he had related those experiences, he

it in one of their strange sweeps across the dunes. I do not know whether the buried mission was on the Arizona or the Mexico side of the border.

"The story of the lost mission has been handed down for generations among my people," said Orosco. "Many years ago the Spanish padres came to our village with a religion that was strange and new to the Papagos. They taught my people how to make bricks and persuaded them to help build the mission and to mine the rich placer gold which they had discovered—leading the Indians to believe that the gold would belong to them.

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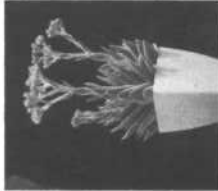
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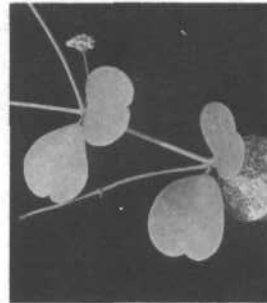
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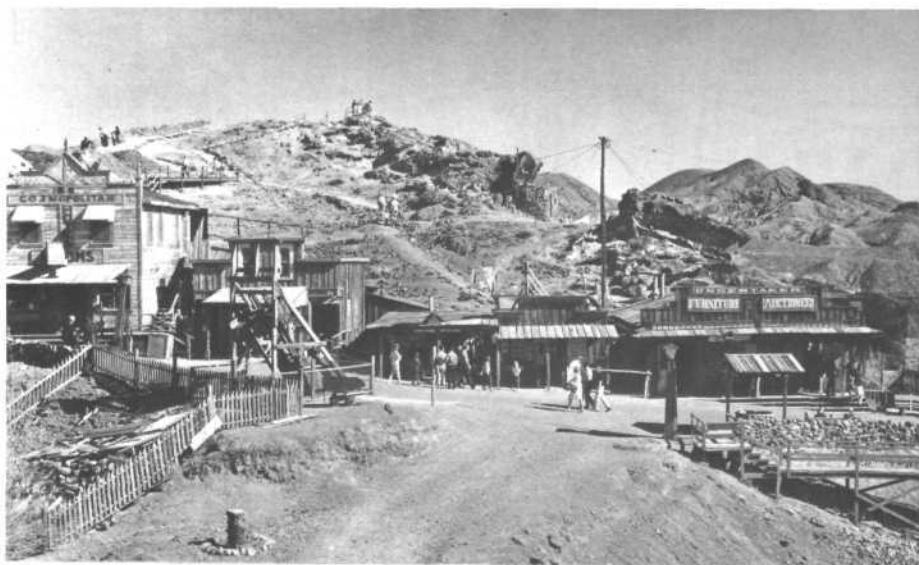
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CALICO -- OLD AND NEW



Above: Calico's main street today. Right: Lane's General Store offers everything from Long Johns to rock candy. Below: Tour through Maggie Mine starts here.



by Stan Kellogg



IT WAS in the spring of 1881 that rich silver deposits were discovered near Calico, California by three prospectors. The area's richest deposit, however, was found by two prospectors grubstaked by San Bernardino county sheriff John C. King, the uncle of Walter Knott who was to later institute his famous Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park and who recently purchased and restored the old town of Calico.

The deposit found by Mr. King's prospectors was located near the summit of the mountain which towers over the town to the north and was named "The Silver King Mine" in honor of John King. This rich mine produced over

More than 30 miles of tunnels honey-combed the mountain. Some of the veins were four feet wide with the silver assaying from 200 to 400 ounces per ton. Several factors contributed to the ease and low cost of mining in Calico. No shoring was necessary because the tunnels were cut through solid rock. Water and fuel were available for the milling operations and railroad transportation was conveniently located at the nearby town of Daggett, making it feasible to build a spur line to the dry lake where the stamp mills were located. Last, but not least, was the high price of ore prevailing at that time.

There seems to be some confusion as to how the town came by its colorful name, but anyone viewing the beautiful multi-colored mountain will draw his own conclusion. The town grew rapidly to a peak population of 3500 inhabitants. The main street was located on a small plateau running north and south with a length of about 400 yards. Chinatown was situated on the eastern side of Calico. At one time the Chinese colony, led by a tough old Chinese named Yung Hen, was sizable and included a restaurant and three or four boarding houses in its environs. In its heyday, Calico's 13 saloons furnished thirsty miners the wherewithal to wash the dust from their parched throats, and a couple of dance halls, several hotels, three general stores, some restaurants, two drugstores, a jewelry store, assay offices and a town hall catered to other needs. There were also a chapel and a schoolhouse on a little promontory overlooking Wall Street Canyon on the west side of the town.

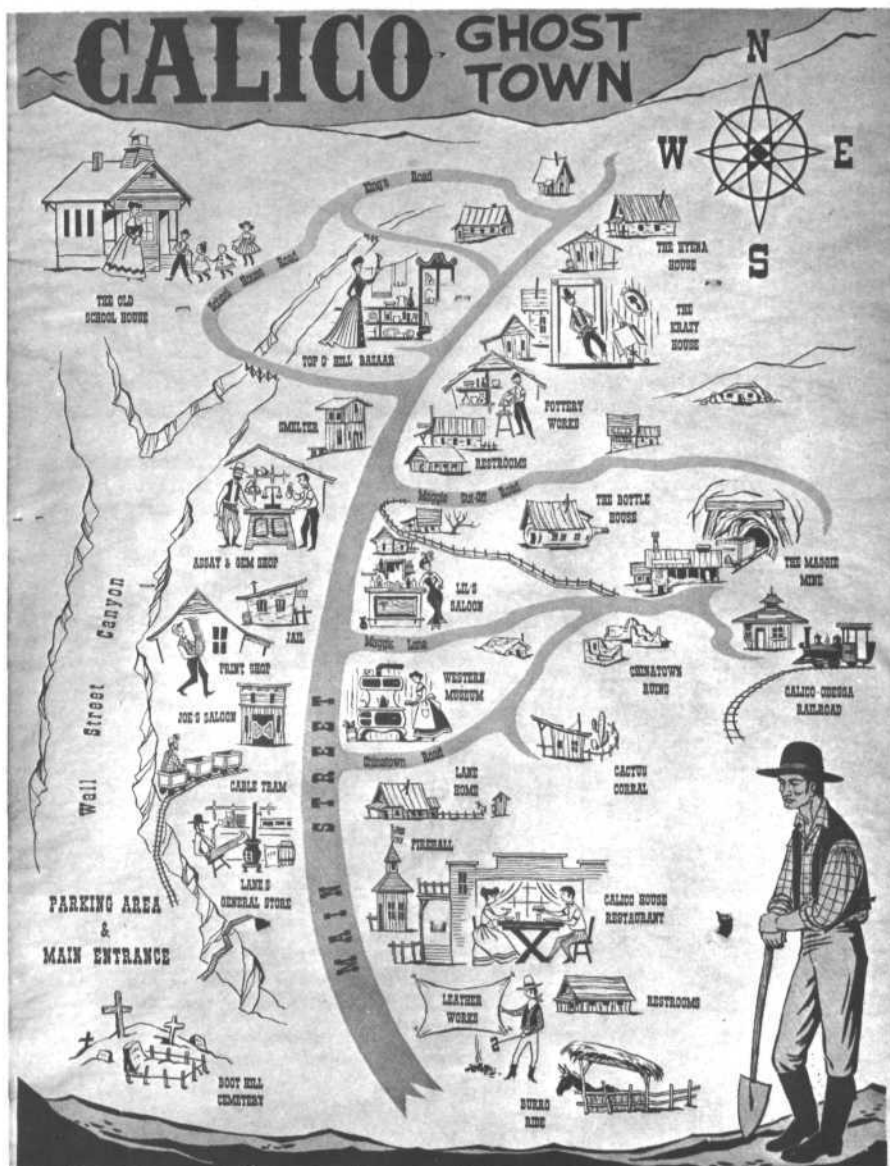
A fire swept through the little town in 1884, but the inhabitants immediately rebuilt and activities continued in a normal vein. Then a more disastrous fire occurred in September of 1887. The second fire reportedly started in the roof of one of the restaurants and was spread from building to building by a high wind until 135 buildings were demolished. Reconstruction plans this time called for every third or fourth building to be constructed of adobe in order to provide fire breaks. Some of the marks left by the fire can still be seen at Calico.

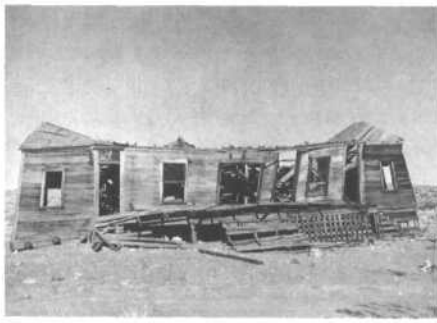
Calico's most productive years were from 1881 until the mid-1890s. In 1881 the price of silver was \$1.29 per ounce, but it fell to 53c an ounce in 1896, when the old mining town's death knell tolled.

Today you can re-live those historical moments in the ghost town of Calico by turning off of the Barstow—Las Vegas highway (U.S. 91-466) onto the Calico road about 10 miles east of Barstow, California. Admission to the ghost town is free, as is parking in one of the two ample lots. Vehicles are not allowed in the town. A small fee is charged to take a ride on the Calico-Odesa Railroad, a favorite with both youngsters and adults. Another tour worth the time and money is the Maggie Mine. This is a self-conducted tour in which you may proceed as rapidly or as slowly as desired. At the entrance to the tunnel is a gorgeous rock display and spaced throughout the tunnel are wax figures of miners which depict working conditions in those days. The tour terminates at the mine's glory hole. An interesting museum of "The Days That Used To Be" is located near

If you wish to eat in Calico, the Calico House Restaurant serves meals, and snacks and soft drinks are available at other locations in the town.

To see the rugged Calico Mountains as they were in the old days, you may drive your own vehicle up the Doran Scenic Drive. To reach it, go east from Calico along the foot of the mountains. At the sign "Scenic Doran Drive," turn up the road and follow it for five miles through the thrilling, forbidding, but wonderful Odessa and Bismark canyons. In some places the road winds through rock walls and is wide enough for only one car. You wonder how old-time mule skinnners drove their teams and wagons along the tortuous road. It is a one-way drive which forms a loop and is no place for a vehicle in poor mechanical condition or one with doubtful tires. □





THE TITUS CANYON ROUTE



by Florine Lawlor



ITUS Canyon's winding gorge suggests the Grand Canyon in miniature. From an altitude of 5000 feet in the Grapevine mountains, its peculiar geological formations, its ever-changing colors, and its meteorological phenomena evoke strange thoughts of an impossible land.

Located inside California's Death Valley National Monument, Titus Canyon lies within a few hours drive from Las Vegas, Nevada. Entering the gateway to Death Valley at Beatty, it is about seven miles to the narrow, one-way road which winds through Titus Canyon for 26 miles. The canyon was named for Morris Titus, a prospector who disappeared in the canyon in 1907 and was never seen again. Because he was known to carry a large amount of gold at times, his family demanded a search for his body. It proved fruitless, but the subsequent publicity was sufficient to give the canyon its name.

Agate, jasper, copper-stained ore, vermiculite, quartz and slate lure rockhounds along the twisting road. Ghost town chasers follow it with equal enthusiasm as the old town of Leadfield lies in ruin some 16 miles into the canyon. Leadville was a promotional boom town which lived and died between August of 1926 and January of 1927, a mere five months before it uttered a last gasp to Death Valley's mining era. Five or six buildings still stand. One is the post office, an-

Distant sand dunes roll into the empty vastness of Death Valley. Below: The remnants of Chloride City, a mining camp born in the 1800s which died in 1914. The building above was once a bunk house.

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other a small hotel. Test holes are visible here and there in the hillsides.

Further on into the canyon is Klare Spring, which furnished water for the small town, but which is now almost dry. Petroglyphs left by ancient Indians on rocks near the spring are indicative of an earlier population in the area. At one spot called, with particular lack of imagination, "The Narrows," precipitous cliffs rise 500 feet from the canyon floor with only a 15 foot span in which to drive a car. In the summer time, Titus Canyon is plagued by devastating cloud-bursts which have deposited mud on both sides of the cliffs above the water-line of the flood waters that thundered down the canyon.

As you leave Titus Canyon, a beautiful view of the upper portion of Death Valley stretches into your future, while behind, in the past, the mountains close a

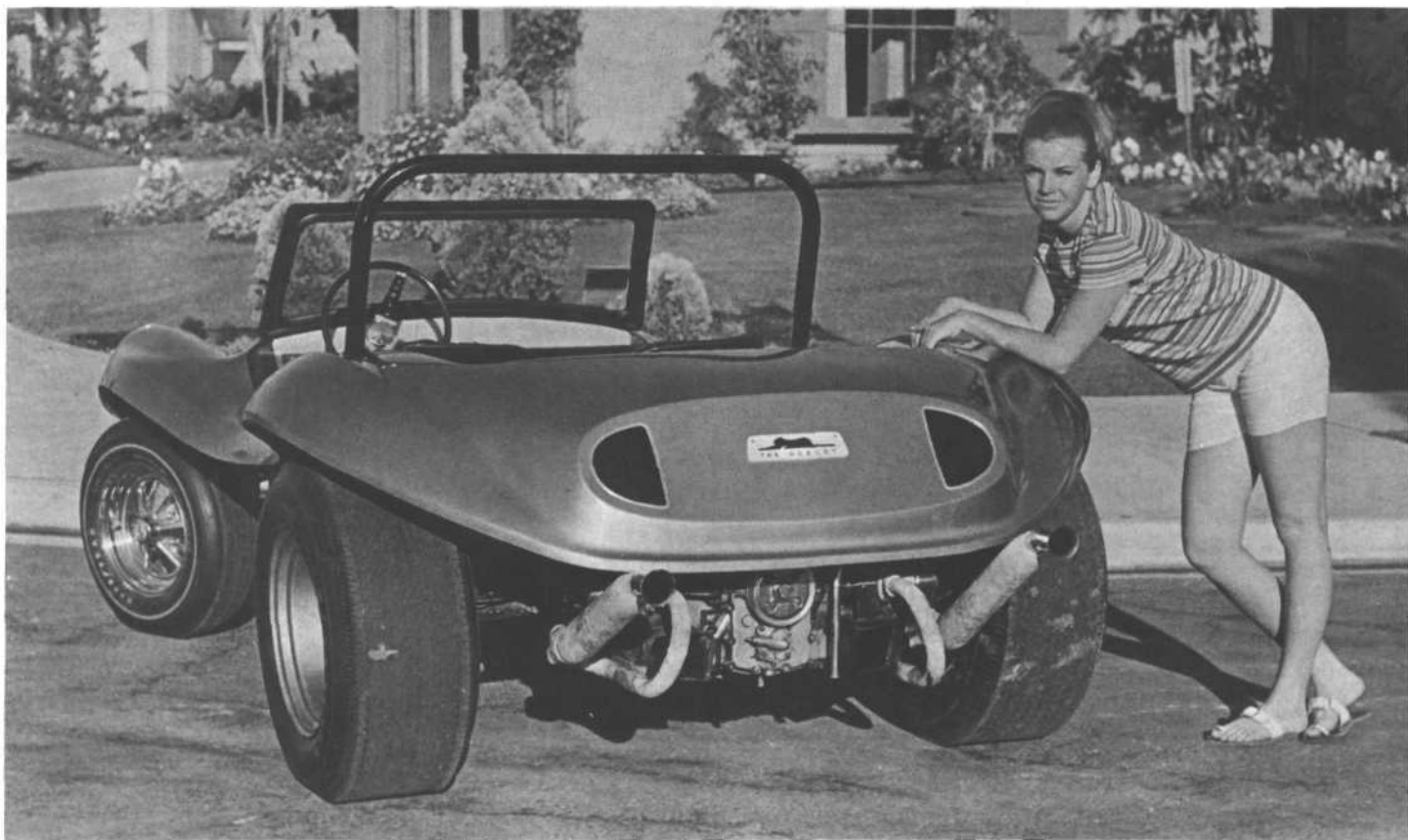
door, leaving no trace of the confining passage.

To continue en route to Chloride City, make a left turn onto the paved road and follow it for 14 miles to the Beatty cutoff. Again turn left and follow the highway over Daylite Pass to the Death Valley Monument entrance. Here you make a sharp right turn and after 11 miles of good desert road you will arrive at Chloride City, 400 feet up in the eastern fringe of the Funeral Mountains.

This mining camp boomed twice—once in the late 1800s and again when Rhyolite was in its heyday. Many tons of rich ore were taken out of the Chloride Cliff mine. However, Chloride City and its mines were doomed from the start because water had to be hauled up the face of the 5000 foot cliff from the Keane Wonder Mine below via a tram-

way, which proved far too expensive to operate.

Chloride City is a rockhound's dream with great hornblende schists filled with garnets, agate, cinnabar, calcite, colored jasper, and even small quantities of pink quartz. Three or four "Cousin Jack" houses still stand. These little huts were partially dug into the hillside as protection against the elements and are very well preserved. To the north of the city, Chloride Cliff affords a superlative view of Death Valley. Salt beds and dry Rogers Lake shimmer before sand dunes backed by the magnificent Panamint Mountains and the snow-capped craggy peaks of the Sierras. The climb to the cliff top is steep, but it is short, so don't miss it. On the trail down you will see the ruins of an early arrastra mill and what is left of an old two-stamp mill that once processed ore from the surrounding mines. □



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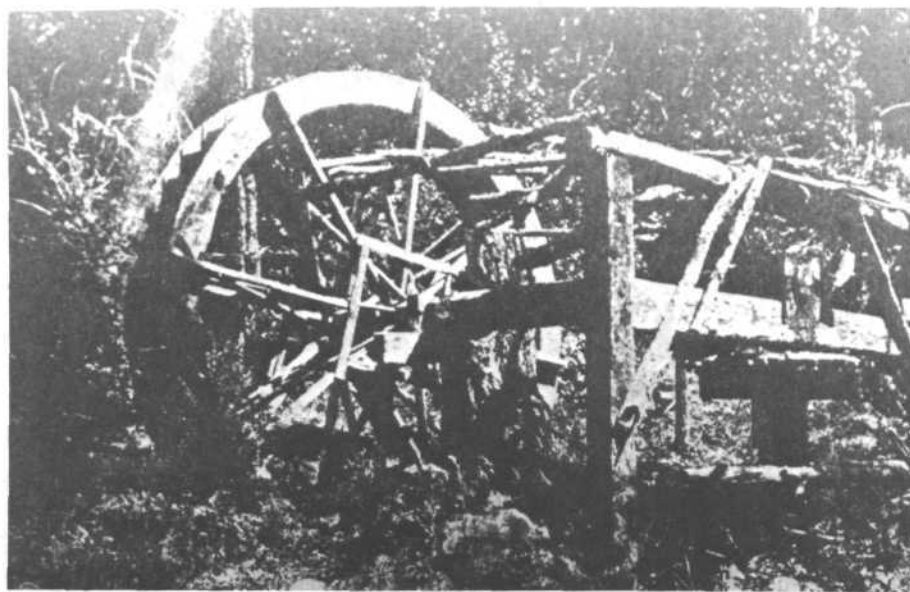
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The story of the ARRASTRA

by George Thompson



Water wheel rigged as power source to operate old-time arrastra.



LIKE THE one-blanket burro prospector, the arrastra has become a thing of the past. Most modern prospectors have never even heard of it, much less seen one, and the word itself can't be found in many dictionaries and encyclopedias. But in its day, the arrastra played as important a part in the development of modern mining as did the gold pan, the rocker and the sluice box.

The arrastra is of direct Spanish-Mexican origin. Its idea was conceived in Spain and brought to the new world by Cortes and his conquistadores when they seized Mexico from the Indian emperor Montezuma. It followed them as they gradually advanced northward, overcoming each new Indian nation they met. Wherever the Spaniards found gold or silver, they stopped long enough to establish mines and often to make slaves of the native Indians, forcing them to dig the precious metal. There were no mills then and only primitive devices were available to break the metal from its captive rock. The arrastra, although crude of design and slow in operation, was the best of these and did its job well.

The arrastra was simply made, using material already on hand or easily obtained. From a center pivot-point, which could be as simple as a post sticking from a pile of rocks or as elaborate as an axle and spindle from the miner's wagon,

there was attached a long pole 15 to 20 feet in length. Heavy stones were attached with chains near the pole's free end and as it was carried around the center pivot-point, the stones were dragged along a circular path over a floor of smooth rock or hard packed clay.

Power was supplied by a horse or burro walking around and around the circular path at the pole's end. When no draft animal was available the Spaniards didn't hesitate to force Indian slaves to walk the circle. Sometimes a water wheel could be rigged to power the arrastra, but most often the miner's faithful burro or cayuse was hitched to the pole's end to supply the power.

The heavy blocks of close-grained rock which were dragged over the chunks of gold-bearing quartz placed in their path eventually ground the ore to a powder. When the arrastra was near water, a small trickle would be fed into the pit to turn the powdered ore into a thin soup. The mineral-laden water slowly washed from an opening at a low point in the pit and into a sluice box fitted with riffles, behind which the gold particles settled. Often water had to be carried to the crude mill when there was no supply at hand. When two men worked a mine together, one dug the ore and fed it to the mill while the other carried water and tended the sluice. Light-weight particles of country rock were carried off

with the waste water. In desert areas, where water was precious, the finely ground ore was panned or separated in a dry washer.

Some mills were cruder even than the arrastra. One type of primitive reduction mill consisted of nothing more than a long pole fixed to a pivot or boulder with a heavy, flat rock or iron stamp attached near its end. Underneath the heavy rock or stamp was an iron plate or another flat rock into which pieces of ore could be placed. To operate it, the miner lifted the pole's weighted end and then dropped the weight on the ore beneath, the spring of the pole assisting him somewhat in his labors. Sometimes a smaller rock would be hung from the short end of the pole to act as a counter-weight when the weighted end was raised. The crushed ore could then be run through a sluice box if water was available, or panned when water was scarce.

The arrastra made its first appearance in America at the rich diggings of California. As gold seekers traveled northward into Oregon and across the Sierras into Nevada and the Southwest, it followed them there. As long as gold ore could be easily dug and broken loose from veins and ledges, the arrastra kept turning, but when surface ore became too difficult to work the mill was dismantled and the chains which held the rock blocks and other salvageable parts were taken to new and easier diggings. Ore mined in those days had to be "free" gold, easily

separated from the quartz, and both plentiful and close at hand before it was worth the miner's time and risk of life to mine it. Obviously, only the richest ore could be recovered by such primitive means and only shallow surface pockets and veins were worked.

It was a long, slow step from the arrastra to the thundering stamp mills of 100 years ago that preceded today's modern reduction plants. Forgotten arrastras still lie hidden by brush almost in sight of modern mills, but though they may not be far apart in distance, they are separated by centuries in time.

Desert travelers are well-advised to keep an eye peeled for the tell-tale circular pit worn deep in the ground that marks the site of an arrastra. Not only do they tell a fascinating tale of the conquistadores and pioneers of yesteryear, but a lucky searcher might find a priceless relic or memento near the site. Often pieces of gold-bearing quartz lie scattered over the ground and sometimes a careful searcher can find the "coyote holes" which supplied the rich ore for the mills.

Occasionally prospects had to be abandoned because Indians drove the miners away, but more often it was because tools and labor were not available to dig deeper. More than one fortune has been made by prospectors who came later and weren't limited to the length of a shovel handle. □



This arrastra still bears scour marks, which indicate considerable use. The drag stone with a cable still around it is still intact.



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Darwin, California

BY LAMBERT FLORIN



WE TOOK off our hats, and then looking over the scene of so much trial, suffering and death, spoke the thought uppermost in our minds, saying, 'Goodby, Death Valley!' Many accounts have been given to the world as the origin of the name, but ours were the first visible footsteps, and we were the party which gave it the saddest and most dreadful name that came first to our memories."

Thus wrote William Lewis Manly after he and the Jayhawker parties attempted to cross the long, sunken desert valley called Death. The experiences of these men constitute one of the most tragic episodes in the history of California.

It was on Christmas Day of 1849 that the Manly party entered Death Valley, camping near a spot that would be later

known as Furnace Creek. Although all were suffering from hunger, thirst and fatigue, they were able to get as far as the present Bennett's Well. The weary members named the spot "Last Camp," as indeed it was for many of them. Recognizing that it was impossible for most to travel farther, Manly ordered all others to remain in camp while he and a man named Rogers went forth to look for help.

After a journey beset by sufferings and difficulties, they did reach help, but when they returned to Last Camp they found death and desolation. Barely alive were the Bennett and Arcane families. All the others had despaired of ever again seeing their leader and had set out on their own. One, Captain Culverwell, collapsed and died only a short distance from camp. The others simply disappeared.

Other emigrants came through the val-

ley, some meeting disaster, some getting through successfully. One of these latter was a prospecting party headed by Dr. Darwin French. In the spring of 1860 these gold-hungry men found a crude furnace at the first Manly campsite, an incident which gave the spot the name of Furnace Creek. The furnace is generally thought to have been left by overlaid Mormons.

Darwin and his men were in search of the fabled Gunsight Mine, presumably located in the Argus Mountains, a spur of the Panamint Range. According to reports, an emigrant party had reached the area after the usual hardships of crossing the desert mountains when a different kind of disaster struck. The gunsight had broken off of their only weapon. An Indian offered to fix it and, after disappearing into a canyon, soon returned and proudly presented them their gun with a newly mounted sight fashioned of gleaming silver! The suffering men went on to the San Joaquin Valley, but the incident of the silver gunsight wasn't forgotten.

This particular deposit of silver remains lost to this day, but Darwin and his party did find some silver deposits, rich ones. A camp was set up to expand operations. The town that grew up on the spot was named Darwin, although by that time the leader himself, not being a working miner, had again set out on a prospecting trip.

The rise of Darwin's town was meteoric. Bullion was shipped out within 10 months and even before that the Panamint stage line included the new town. People were moving in from fading Panamint City and, as might be expected, stage robberies, shootings and hangings went on as they had in the camp in Surprise Canyon near Panamint.

Darwin, however, wasn't content to follow exactly the path of her predecessor. She climaxed her brief period of glory with a full-fledged labor dispute, this still a novelty in 1879. Arbitration was accomplished by gunfire. When enough miners and owners lay dead in the dust, the quarrel was settled with a small pay raise.

Today, Darwin is dead as a mining town, although some operations still survive in its environs. A few houses are occupied by vacationers in winter, one by a retired couple living there permanently. In the little house are many glass cases filled with specimens of ore and mineral, some unequalled in any collection we have ever seen. Darwin's original schoolhouse is shown in our photo. □

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I told Mike Kovacs he was nuts to believe such a fantastic yarn, but I went along just for the ride and what do you know . . .

We Found Lost Treasure!

by JACK PEPPER



FORTY years ago two partners named Bill and Siegfried were prospecting for gold in a creek in the Green Horn Mountains located in Kern County, California. They had worked the creek for about a year without hitting real pay dirt when Siegfried met and fell in love with a girl in Bakersfield.

Siegfried wasn't making enough money to support a wife so he decided to go to northern California to see if he could hit it rich and then return and marry his sweetheart. Bill stayed in the Green Horn Mountains. When Siegfried returned a year later he showed Bill a metal box containing, among other things, large gold nuggets and a gold necklace for his sweetheart and said he had indeed struck it rich in the Mother Lode country. He was going to get married and return to his placer mine. Bill could come along if he wanted to.

The next day a mine caved in on a third miner and while Siegfried and Bill were attempting to save him, the third miner and Siegfried were killed by a landslide. Bill searched for the metal box which Siegfried had buried in the isolated area, but he never found it. After the futile search, he left the area and has never returned.

This is the story Bill, the surviving partner, told Mike Kovacs after they became acquainted while buying supplies in the same hardware store in Los Angeles. Bill told Mike he was welcome to the lost cache since he, himself, was too old to look any more and that Mike had a better chance with his "gold-finding machine," meaning a metal detector. It was this same story that Mike was telling me as we had breakfast two months ago at Lake Isabella, at the foot of the Green Horn Mountains.

If Mike had given me more details of this fantastic story and his hair-brained search for the lost cache when he called me several days earlier I would never

have agreed to meet him at Lake Isabella. After hearing the story, I told him he was nuts.

I first met Mike in January, 1966, when he walked into the office of Desert Magazine and showed me large pieces of placer gold which he found in a wash near Twentynine Palms, Calif. Only trouble was he couldn't relocate the wash.

After visiting the lost gold wash site with Mike and becoming acquainted with him, I was convinced and wrote an article for the February 1966 issue of *Desert*. Several people have shown me placer gold they found in the area after my article was published, although the color was not as rich as Mike's find.

Since then Mike usually stops by Desert Magazine after his treasure hunts to show me what he has found. Ranging from gold watches to rusty rifles, Mike's collection is easily worth \$5000 or more. His success is due to extensive research,

knowing how to use his metal detector, and his enthusiasm.

Despite my calling him nuts and my skepticism, Mike was enthusiastic about his newest venture. "So maybe the story Bill tells isn't true, maybe we'll find something else," Mike said in his Hungarian accent. I had camped out that night by Lake Isabella and enjoyed a swim before breakfast and was feeling at peace with the world. And since Mike usually finds something I agreed to go along for the ride.

Two hours after leaving Lake Isabella, and 5000 feet higher, we arrived at the Davis Camp Ground where we established our overnight camp. A ranger stopped by to warn us rattlesnakes were numerous. We didn't see any during the trip but that is probably because we always make noise when having to walk through brush and always watch where we are walking.



Proving it just doesn't pay to be skeptical, Mike Kovacs holds a lost cache after locating it with his metal detector under the stump of an old tree.

After hastily setting up camp, we headed for the creek bed—using a crude map Bill had drawn as a guide for Mike. Although the creek was evidently flowing 40 years ago, we found it mostly dry. Due to giant boulders and vegetation we had to hike along an old trail next to the creek bed.

Bill had told Mike there were several cabins in the area between an old road and the now-abandoned mining town of Petersburg. He was vague, however, as to which cabin was his former home and to its exact location. Used to hiking through deserts at sea level, I was a sad sack as I struggled up and down the hills along the creek at 7000 feet elevation muttering "this is worse than looking for a needle in a haystack." Mike acted as though he didn't hear me.

Between the head of the creek and the abandoned town of Petersburg, we found four cabins in various stages of dilapidation. Using our metal detectors we combed each of the four areas. Although we found several old coins there was no sign of Siegfried's buried metal box.

There was water in the creek next to the old buildings which once were Petersburg. Two men and a woman were sitting by the creek, cooling their feet.

"Hi, how are you," I greeted.

No answer.

"I hear someone has bought the entire town of Petersburg," I said.

"Yep," one volunteered. The other scowled at him.

"Know who they are?"

"Nope," one said as they walked back toward the buildings of Petersburg.

Having gained this interesting information for Desert readers, Mike and I

retraced our steps. Returning to camp after our five hour grueling hike and search I had had it. As I fell asleep that night I could hear Mike muttering "It must be here somewhere."

The next morning Mike left camp before I had breakfast, saying he was going back to search the first cabin site more thoroughly. When I tried to find him later he was not there. I returned to camp and an hour later a happy Hungarian arrived carrying a heavy corroded metal box.

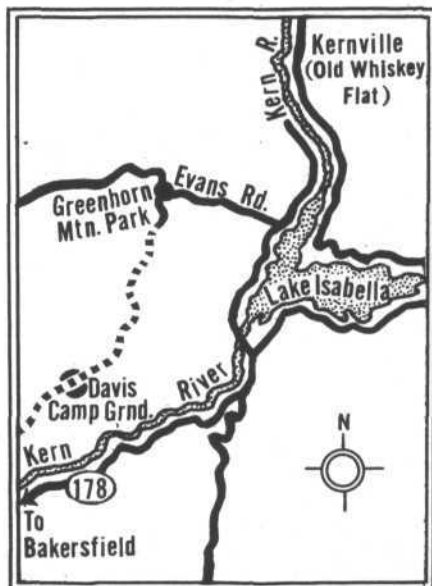
Call it the luck of the Hungarians! Returning to our first search area, Mike had taken a wrong turn and ended up on the other side of the creek. Since he was there he decided to explore that area. Within two hundred yards he found what once was a cabin, now completely leveled. After an hour of detecting the area he tried an old tree stump. His metal detector buzzed, and buried under the trunk, he found Siegfried's box.

Since the heavy lock on the box was too strong to break open we pried the rusty pin from the latch. The first item in the

box was a musty smelling leather pouch on which was the name "Siegfried." It contained 65 silver dollars, the latest date being 1906. Most were 1885 vintage. The next item was a beautiful gold necklace with two \$10.00 and one \$20.00 gold pieces. Other items included a box containing 10 ounces of good-sized gold nuggets, a silver whiskey flask and a photograph of a young woman . . . Siegfried sweetheart or his mother?

Mike kept going through the box and shaking his head. It seems what he hadn't told me because I might have been even more skeptical was Bill had told him there was "at least \$2,000 in gold nuggets." When we later went back to the site so I could take pictures, Mike continued his search for the missing gold nuggets . . . or had Bill's imagination gotten the best of him . . . because we failed to find any more treasure.

The next time Mike calls, or anyone else for that matter, with an unbelievable and fantastic yarn about a buried treasure, I probably won't believe them, but I'll go along for the ride—just in case. □



Mike and his wife inspect the contents of the metal box buried 40 year ago. Estimated value of the contents is about \$1000.

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Ghosts of the Amargosa



by Deke Lowe



HE world-famous trademark "20-Mule Team Borax" arouses a mental image of Death Valley, hardships, thirst, heat, sandstorms and roads so

rough that cream could churn to butter within a mile. This mental picture is mostly true, except that 20-Mule Team actually originated, and years later ended, at a little known spot in Amargosa Valley east of Death Valley proper.

Some adobe ruins, located on Death Valley Highway 127, 50 miles north of Baker, California, near the Tecopa Hot Springs, are the Old Amargosa Borax Works. Traveling north, you will notice a large playa off to their right as you descend the Ibex Summit. Beyond the Tecopa turnoff and the point of the clay hills, a few sun-bleached, adobe walls appear on both sides of the road. If, in your imagination, you see a 20-Mule Team being harnessed by a hard visaged mule-skinner and a helper it is just a reflection from the past, as the largest ruin was the barn where the 20-Mule teams were

stabled. It was here that borax was discovered about 1882 by two prospectors, Parks and Ellis. The mineral ground was sold to the Borax Company then operating at the Harmony Borax Works in Death Valley.

The new find, located out of the awesome heat of Death Valley in the relatively cool valley of the Amargosa, had a peculiar value to the Borax Company. With its discovery, the processing of borax could continue 12 months of the year instead of having to suspend operations during the searing heat of summer months.

The method of mining and refining "Cottonball" borax was roughly as follows: Large areas of the playa were diked with earth and flooded with water which penetrated the ground, dissolving the borax in the soil. As the rays of the blazing hot sun evaporated the surface water, the underground moisture was drawn to the surface, carrying a solution of borax and other salts. These crystals were snow white and deposited a crust inches thick on the surface of the dry

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ponds. Scraped into heaps, they were hauled to vats where a brine was prepared. The brine was brought to a boiling temperature, then the fires were killed, and the vats allowed to cool. As the temperature reached a low point, pure borax crystals precipitated onto metal rods suspended in the solution. In Death Valley's intense summer heat the vats failed to cool sufficiently to allow precipitation. The discovery at Amargosa solved this perplexing problem. The 20-Mule Team, as far as borax is concerned, originated at the Amargosa Borax Works when Ed Stiles hitched his own 12 mules to another team of eight left by a displeased muleskinner.

Today you can cruise from Daggett to Yermo and there take Interstate 15 east to Baker, then turn north on 127 and arrive at Amargosa, within two hours. When Ed Stiles and his swamper left the Amargosa for Daggett with 20 mules, pulling two loaded wagons of borax and a tanker of water, they faced five days of exhausting toil, danger and discomfort. The road climbed Ibex Pass and dropped steeply into Death Valley at Ibex Springs, where it then turned south to Saratoga Springs, picking up the Old Spanish Trail that crossed the Avawatz Mountains from Cave Springs to Bitter Springs. There it turned west to Langford Wells, then south to the Mojave River east of Yermo to follow the river to Daggett.

When borax was discovered near Daggett in 1886, the Death Valley operation became uneconomical and the 20-Mule teams were retired in favor of a narrow-gauge railroad, until 1905 when the borax there became so scarce that a return to Death Valley was necessary.

Highgrade borax in rock form, colmanite, had been found and developed in the mountains on the eastern rim of Death Valley. This spurred the construction of the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad which was built in order to tap the extensive deposits of borax en route

to the gold camps of Nevada. As construction progressed northward, an unexpected obstacle slowed the timetable. After passing the Dumont Sand Dunes and entering the Tecopa Canyon, the usually dry but sometimes rampaging Amargosa River had to be bridged and earth cuts made and deep ravines filled before the unique stream was tamed. At the same time the hungry demands of the borax trade had to be met. So old wagons were reactivated and once again the 20-Mule teams hauled borax, this time from the Lila C. Mine to the approaching railhead. In June 1907, the rails reached Zabriskie Siding, close to the Old Amargosa Works. The buildings were still habitable, the barn and corral intact, and again they served for a brief time. This was the last time the old wagons and teams were used, for shortly thereafter the rails reached Death Valley Junction and a spur track was built to the mine. The 20-Mule team ended at its point of origin.

Today the railroad is gone. Zabriskie Siding and the Amargosa buildings are nothing more than potholes where bottle hunters have searched the junk heaps. The ponds of Amargosa contain borax, a natural cleanser, which local inhabitants use for practical purposes. This is also a popular place for rockhounds to meet before they explore nearby clay hills for the semi-precious, iridescent opals that occur in a thin seam of silica.

Should you depart over the Ibex Pass at dusk, watch closely in the darkness and you might think you see a gang of 50 Chinese cutting and stacking greasewood. They are attired in large-brimmed hats, loose fitting shirts and trousers, with a long pigtail hanging down their backs. Think nothing of this. Legend says they were employed by the Borax Company to cut fuel to heat the vats and when the operation ceased, no one told them. Now they are condemned to eternal labor, as there is no one left with the authority to tell them to quit. Oldtimers in the area often see them. □

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BACK COUNTRY TRAVEL

FOUR WHEEL CHATTER . . .

by Bill Bryan

It is good news to hear the plans are in the works to see that the "4WD Trail Trip Tips" booklet will be made available as a standard item with all 4WD vehicles delivered to buyers. Another real fine item to those who wish to form a four wheel drive club is the NFWDA booklet "How To Organize a Four Wheel Drive Club." For further information write to the NFWDA, P. O. Box 46153, Seattle, Washington 98146.

Why not a "Nationwide Four Wheel Drive Conservation Week?" Why don't you individuals and club officers of the over 300 four wheel drive clubs in the U.S.A. write to Doug Reeder, President of the California Association of 4WD clubs, P. O. Box 5001, Sacramento, Calif., and help him with your ideas to improve the back country. Let's all help the cause of conservation.

This summer we made a 4700 mile road test of our new Jeepster towing a 15 foot Field and Stream travel trailer over Highway 66 to Chicago and then into northern Indiana, returning across Kansas and the midwest to Colorado where we think we've found heaven on earth. The only problem with the new Jeep, other than eight miles to the gallon, was that the points closed up during a rainstorm and we were stuck on a detour going through Flagstaff, Arizona, on the way home. Also, unknown to us, the fill spout for the gas tank was defective and cracked, causing us to smell gas fumes during part of the trip. It took some 2000 miles to figure out what was wrong.

We encountered no problems, during the trip, finding places to park for the night as practically every state we passed through had excellent campsites and roadside rests. As a matter of fact, California could learn something about roadside rests from Illinois.

The worst roads we traveled were in the state of Kansas where the charge was \$2.15 to travel a toll road resembling the poorest desert road in our opinion.

In Colorado we spent three days between Cortez and Telluride. For those

of you who haven't been there recently, the road is paved from Delores to Telluride with only a four mile stretch through the town of Rico remaining to be paved. We have never seen so many deserted camp grounds and unfished streams—with miles and miles of 4WD trails to mines and ghost towns.

Coming home we spent one night in Phoenix, Arizona, with Harold Hawthorne of the Phoenix Jeep Club. Harold informed us he has submitted his resignation as editor of the NFWDA newsletter, which we are most sorry to hear.

Scuttlebutt says Jeep will be using the Buick V-8 in the 1968 models; is this true? Have you driven the V-8 Scout? Talk about the difference between day and night in the same machines!

It's official now . . . the Mexican 1000 Rally is a reality. If you have a strong healthy machine, plus \$250, and would like to tackle Baja, write to: NORRA, 19730 Ventura Blvd., Woodland Hills, Calif., for more information, map and entry blank. This event is scheduled for November 1-4, 1967. We here at DESERT only hope this event will do something, besides racing in general, to help the people of Baja. Only after you have visited this wonderful, intriguing country can you appreciate the beauty of the country and the graciousness and serenity of the inhabitants. So, if you aren't a racing enthusiast—or even if you are—why not make it on down to Baja this fall? It could be an especially exhilarating trip right now due to the hurricane they experienced in early September, where, I understand, Bob Feuerhelm had to leave a couple of Jeeps while down there looking over the racing area. You can't really call it a course or a road as it changes with the weather.

See you next month. Don't forget to get any items, for mention in this column, to me at least two months in advance. This copy is being written in September and it goes into the November issue. It's time to leave on a weekend trip to the New York mountains to see if there is anything left of the Sagamore Mine and Lanfair Valley.

Calendar of Western Events

Information on Western Events must be received at DESERT six weeks prior to scheduled date.

BORREGO SPRINGS DESERT FESTIVAL, Oct. 19-22, celebrating the opening of the desert season in this Southern California Anza-Borrego State Park area. Events include jeep tours, nature walks, guided excursions, rockhound show, barbecues, campfire sessions, art displays, etc. For information write to Borrego Springs (Calif.) Chamber of Commerce.

GEM RUSH OF '67, Oct. 28 & 29, L.E.R.C. Rockcrafters Club 12th annual show, 2814 Empire Ave., Burbank, Calif. Exhibits and demonstrations. Free admission and parking.

DALY CITY ROCKHOUNDS Golden Gate Gem and Mineral Show, Oct. 21-22, War Memorial Bldg., 6655 Mission St., Daly City, Calif.

FIESTA DE LA CUADRILLA, Nov. 3-5, Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif. Square dancers from the entire Southwest participate in the celebration.

MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA "ALL MINERAL" SHOW, Nov. 4 & 5, Pasadena (Calif.) City College Campus. No admission charge.

AVION TRAVELCADE CLUB'S Arizona Fall Rally, Nov. 8-13, Fairgrounds, Yuma, Arizona. For owners of Avion Trailers.

DEATH VALLEY 49er ENCAMPMENT, Nov. 9-12, Death Valley, California. Four days of events during this world famous annual encampment. Public parking for trailers and campers within the Monument.

29 PALMS GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY'S 7th Annual Gem Show, Nov. 11 & 12, Twentynine Palms, Calif. Admission and parking free. Dealers.

MONTEBELLO MINERAL AND LAPIDARY SOCIETY'S Gem Show, Nov. 11, National Guard Armory, Montebello, Calif. No admission charge. Free maps of rock hunting areas.

POINSETTIA FIELDS BLOOM, December. During the annual Mid-Winter season, visitors entering San Diego County from the north along U.S. Highway 5 view miles of rolling hills which stretch out at roadside in a brilliant carpet of blooming poinsettias. This is the location of the world's largest Poinsettia Ranch, occupying 400 acres which border the Pacific Ocean. San Diego, known as the Poinsettia Capital of the World, produces over 90% of all commercially grown Poinsettias, America's favorite Christmas flower.

NEW IDEAS by V. LEE OERTLE

Last issue we started a page specifically aimed at telling readers what's new in the world of travel and recreation. New ideas about travel, motoring, desert camping and general desert living are welcome. So if you have a new and useful idea—something that hasn't been published before—please send it on to: Desert Product Report, Desert Magazine, Palm Desert, Calif. 92260.

☆☆

Thousands of families camp the winter desert in a station wagon, which is a fine method for simple overnights. However, privacy is often a problem. At night, others can see into the wagon area through those huge wraparound side and rear windows. Changing clothes becomes a problem each night and morning. Reader Jane March suggests that the problem can be handled by carrying a bottle of glass wax. Just before retiring, smear some glass wax over windows where privacy is desired. It doesn't take much to cover several windows in a swirly, opaque coating that blocks out stares. In the morning, just wipe it off—and enjoy cleaner windows as a bonus. The same method can be used on large front windows of motor homes, van windows, and rear glass in camper coaches.

☆☆

"So You Want to Go Camping", a folder by R. D. (Don) Hall, manufacturer of Alaskan Campers, answers some of the most often asked questions by camper-coach enthusiasts. Subjects like "Safety, What size pickup do I need, How to keep water tanks fresh and clean, Dismounting the camper-coach" and other ideas are presented. Also included is a "Check list of things to take for a successful camping trip" and "How to save 74% on your family vacation". For free folder write R. D. Hall Mfg. Inc., 9847 Glenoaks Blvd., Sun Valley, California 91352.



Food Tray for Dash of Car or Boat.

It's a handy idea. Called the Boatray, this tough plastic tray has deep-dished recesses for drink glasses (2 spaces provided), and for sandwiches and other prepared foods. Glued to the underside of the tray is a thick foam cushion that grips the car-dash or deck so that it stays put while driving. There is also a rectangular recess for a pack of cigarettes or gum or candy bars. No dimensions were given, but it appears to be about 10-inches square. They cost \$3.95 a pair from Aqua-Meter Corp., 465 Eagle Rock Ave., Roseland, N.J. 07068.

☆☆

Stabilize that Camper Coach! On the newest pickup trucks, the coach and the cab are suspended separately, so that they can twist and torque independently as they should. Unfortunately, the coach is denied a forward tie-down due to this separate suspension set-up. Knudsen Engineering has solved the problem by making a hydraulic shock-snobber. It anchors on the front cowl, next to the windshield, and from there extends up to the underside of the cabover section of the coach. This is a flexible attachment, because the hydraulic stabilizer moves up and down, just like the shock absor-

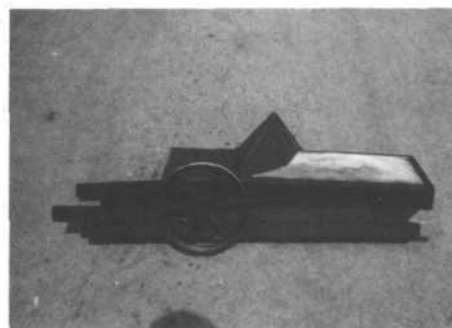
bers on your car or truck. It has quick detachable brackets for easy installation or removal, so that the coach can be loaded or unloaded without extra problems. The result, of course, is a smoother ride. The coach "works" less. Price wasn't announced, but get details from Knudsen Stabilizers, 2552 No. Rosemead Blvd., El Monte, Calif. 91733.

☆☆

Make Ice Last Longer. Just tuck a couple of small dry-ice chunks down along the sides of the ordinary ice block. You'll get a couple of extra days usage, that way.

☆☆

A new collapsible dry washer is now on the market. Called the Alford Dry Washer it is made of wood and folds down to a compact size. Easy to set up. For details write to Compton Rock Shop, 1405 South Long Beach Blvd., Compton, Calif. 90221.



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FOR CHRISTMAS! "From Maine to Mecca"—a vivid story about the development of Coachella Valley and its hardy pioneers. Send \$5.95 check or money order to author: Nevada C. Colley, 82296 Bliss Ave., Indio, Calif. 92201.

NEVADA TREASURE Hunters Ghost Town Guide. Large folded map. 800 place name glossary. Railroads, towns, camps, camel trail. \$1.50. Theron Fox, 1296-C Yosemite, San Jose 26, California.

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"1200 BOTTLES PRICED"—well illustrated, complete description, covers entire field, 164 pages, by J. C. Tibbitts, first president of Antique Bottle Collectors Association and editor of the "Pontil," \$4.75 post paid. The Little Glass Shack, 3161 56th St., Apt. B, Sacramento, Calif. 95820.

"GEMS & MINERALS," the monthly guide to gems, minerals, and rock hobby fun. \$4.50 year. Sample 25c. Gems & Minerals, Mentone, Calif. 92359.

COMPLETELY NEW — Excitingly different! "101 Ghost Town Relics"—Beautiful color cover, lists over 140 relics, over 100 relic photos. Article on restoring, utilization of relics. A price guide included. \$3 ppd. Wes Bressie, Rt. 1, Box 582, Eagle Point, Oregon 97524.

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A Gift That's REALLY Different! Zodiac Parties Menus and Recipes

By Choral Pepper

Editor of DESERT Magazine

The author plans a different party for every month in the year. Her suggestions on the guests to invite and the food to serve are based on astrological analyses of the tastes and interests of those born under each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

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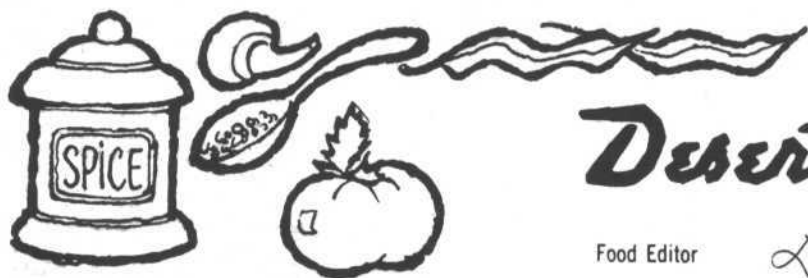
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Desert COOKERY

Food Editor

Lucille Irene Dale Carlson

ALMOND COOKIES

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup chopped almonds
- 1 egg
- 1 1/3 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

Combine to form soft dough. Place by teaspoonfuls on greased cookie sheet. They will spread, so do not put very close together. Top each cookie with a whole blanched almond or almond slivers. Bake at 350 degrees for about 12 minutes, or until golden.

APRICOT BARS

- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 2 1/2 cups brown sugar, packed
- 1 tall can evaporated milk
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped dried apricots
- 1 cup chopped walnuts (black walnuts, if available)

Pour boiling water over apricots and allow to stand 10 minutes. Drain well and cut into small pieces. Combine beaten eggs, brown sugar, milk and lemon juice in large bowl. Sift together flour, soda, cinnamon and salt and add to egg mixture. Stir just until blended. Fold in apricots and walnuts. Do not over-mix. Smooth batter evenly in two well-greased 15x10x1 inch pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Sprinkle confectioners' sugar over top. When cool, cut into bars and store tightly covered. Makes about 5 dozen.

EASY GERMAN CHOCOLATE CAKE

- 1 package white cake mix
- 1 package instant chocolate pudding
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups milk
- 3 egg whites

Combine all ingredients and beat until smooth. Pour into two oiled and floured 9 inch round cake pans, and bake at 375 degrees for 35 or 40 minutes.

Frosting

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 1 1/2 cups coconut
- 3 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup chopped nuts
- a pinch of salt

1 teaspoon vanilla
Cook all ingredients together over slowheat, until thick, about 5 to 7 minutes.

DATE COOKIES

- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup shortening
- 5 tablespoons sour milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon soda with 4 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Cream sugar and shortening, add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add other ingredients and mix well. Form into two logs or loaves, wrap in foil and place in the refrigerator overnight. The next day or later, slice into thin cookies and bake for about 10 minutes at 400 degrees. They will keep indefinitely, so you may bake a few at a time and always have fresh cookies.

OATMEAL-CHOCOLATE COOKIES

- 2 cups sifted flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon soda
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup soft butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated orange rind
- 1 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1 6 oz. package chocolate morsels
- 1/2 cup chopped black walnuts

Cream brown sugar and butter, beat in eggs, stir in water and orange rind; add flour and other ingredients. Drop by rounded tablespoons 3 inches apart on well-greased cookie sheet. For smaller cookies, drop by teaspoon. Bake at 375 for 10 to 12 minutes.

ISLAND COOKIES

- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon shortening
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1 egg, well beaten
- 2 1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup milk

Mix flour, baking powder, soda and salt together. Cream shortening and sugar; add egg and molasses. Add alternately, flour and milk. Fold in raisins, coconut and nuts. Drop by spoonfuls on oiled baking sheet and bake 10 to 15 minutes at 375 degrees.

Letters and Answers

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope. No letters published without complete name and address, although addresses will be withheld at writers request.

Correction . . .

To the Editor: The little dune buggy in the front of the line on page 22, September issue, is not a Grasshopper but is instead a Meyers Manx. Bruce Meyers might not like having his thunder stolen!

W. DEE MEDLEY,
Temple City, California.

Editor's Note: Mr. Medley is right and wrong. The vehicle is a Grasshopper with a Sandpiper body, one of several bodies being manufactured under different names, but all patterned after the Manx. Seems like Bruce Meyers already has his thunder stolen.

Right in the old Blue Bucket . . .

To the Editor: Your story in the September issue on the lost Blue Bucket hit home with me. It has lived in my family for several generations and soon I plan to go and find it and then do about as the fellow did who found the Pegleg gold.

My great grandmother was with the part of the Meek train that found the gold. She also found so much misery, starvation and hell in general that I don't believe she would have told anyone where it was even if she had been able to. My memories of her are faint, as she died about 57 years ago, but I remember her as a tiny, old lady, sitting in a rocking chair near the fireplace and smoking a short clay pipe while she spun wool into yarn to knit mittens for all of us kids. She told of Indian fights, of almost starving to death, of a time when she and her tiny sister lived four days on three hard sour-dough biscuits, and of letting wagons down hills with trees tied to them to slow them down.

My uncle spent over 40 years in searching for the Blue Bucket and although he never found it, he found some wonderful places to look for it. He spent his last years with me and often showed me great stacks of receipts for gold he had sent to the mint, usually for several ounces each. He had a trunk full of clippings and dope on the mine and lived for the day he meant to find it. I believe he panned every draw in that part of the state. According to him, he couldn't raise a color on Rabbit Creek, but did average \$26 a day for quite some time and not too far from that area (on staked land).

Getting back to my great grandmother, a story we heard from our parents when we were older was about her confession, years later, that on the trip in Oregon she suffered unbearably from the abuse of her hulking, drunken husband who had brought along in the wagon a barrel of whiskey instead of a barrel of flour. One night after he had beaten her and almost crippled one of the children she waited until he passed out. Then, with her little hammer, she drove a nail into the top of his head and carefully combed his long unkempt hair over it. I don't know which grave he is in, but it could be one of the ones you located. My uncle knew where two of the graves were, but he said people had a wrong slant on where they believed the gold was from the last grave. He didn't think it was

any of the few producing mines that have been found in that area.

That is my home land up there and as soon as I retire I am going back in my Alaskan camper mounted on a four-wheel drive pickup. Have enjoyed DESERT since the first issue and it is a lot better than it was some time ago—more like it used to be with Randall Henderson. Thanks for a lot of good reading.

Name Withheld on Request,
San Diego, Calif.

Good from Carlsbad . . .

To the Editor: We send kudos for your fine coverage on Carlsbad. Our city has often received recognition because of its coastal location and rustic charm but we believe that Jack Delaney's article "When it's hot, go where it's not" in the September issue is one of the most outstanding. He wrote as if he were a resident, touching each point of interest and activity with a realism that is already sending many readers to enjoy with him the charm of our city.

FRANK KIRK, President,
Chamber of Commerce,
Carlsbad, California.

To Pegleg's Discoverer . . .

To the Man who found Peg Leg's black gold nuggets: I found some water-worn rocks a little over a mile from where you found the black nuggets. They range in size from an agate to a baseball and strangely just as round and smooth. I did not have time to check out the area for gold, but health permitting I hope to this winter.

I know a lot about the true Peg Leg story and have searched for it since July, 1940. What I would appreciate knowing is: were the rock rings completely closed, or did they have a small opening? Were they among the water-worn pebbles and nuggets, and if not how far away were they? Since I have probably already walked over the hill several times, as you said one would, I do not think this will pin-point the exact spot, but will complete the details of the true Peg Leg story to me.

Perhaps I should qualify my opening statement. If your two-mile hike from your jeep is reasonably accurate, and I think it is, then mine is also. I know where you parked your jeep and naturally what direction you took, as I know where Peg Leg was found dying, etc. Those were my tracks and camp signs in the wash you mentioned in the December 1965 issue of DESERT. I left them on purpose to see if you would comment, as I thought it likely that you would check from time to time. I also have looked over the country, as you put it, and agree that it certainly is a trail the Spanish train might have chosen, especially if they were in need of water. Several miles below there, small quantities of black nuggets have been found in four and five places.

I am thankful that you are a conservative and feel as I do. I am grateful that you printed the story. Regarding the belt buckle you found, it belonged to Thomas L. Smith and might

have his initials scratched on it under the corrosion. He left it there on purpose as a claim marker in 1853 or 1854. I would have considered it a treasure if I had found it. Had I found the exact spot, I intended to leave a letter telling you this and much more. Knowing within a few hundred yards at most and unable to find it, I strongly doubt that I ever will, as time is running out for me to camp alone, etc.

During the past 50 years of checking out fact against fiction regarding Pat Garrett, Billy the Kid, James Boys, Dalton Boys, Jim Bridger, Kit Carson, and Lt. Col. G. A. Custer (often misquoted as a general) and his 7th Cavalry, I have come across most of the true Peg Leg history. Any questions that I can answer without disclosing the exact area, I will be happy to.

BILL BEAN,
Sun Valley, Calif.

Editor's Note: The last letter received from the discoverer of Pegleg's gold was printed in the August/September 1966 issue. We hope "Mr. Pegleg" will see this issue and answer Mr. Bean's letter.

More Blue Buckets . . .

To the Editor: I read with interest your story, *The Case of the Blue Bucket Gold*, in the September issue. You mentioned in it that your theory was based on the one expressed in my book *Lost Immigrants of 1845 and The Blue Bucket Gold*. However, I disagree with you in several instances.

Stephen Meek did not con the leaders into accepting him as a guide. Meek's intentions were honorable. He was sure he could follow an old Indian trail through to Willamette Valley by going south, west and then north. Cross trails evidently deceived him. Joe Meek, Stephen's brother, and Dr. White also believed Stephen could find the trail. Later, the trail he was attempting to follow was retraced from the west by going south then northeasterly.

The Herron Wagon train arrived at The Dalles in October 1845, a month ahead of the Military Immigrant Wagon train headed by T'Vault and had no contact with the T'Vault train after their separation at Cranes Prairie until they met at The Dalles when the T'Vault train arrived there. As to just where the source of gold lay, I make no claim to knowing. As I said in my book, the trail my grandfather traveled was what I set out to prove. That meant more to me than finding gold.

I read your magazine with a great deal of pleasure

LOIS A. PIERCE,
Hoodspoor, Washington.

Editor's comment: Our information for the Blue Bucket gold search was obtained from a number of sources. In some instances, other historical data didn't agree with Mrs. Pierce's findings. We found much good data in a recent book—*Terrible Trail: the Meek Cutoff, 1845, by Clark and Tiller, which is carried in the DESERT Magazine bookshop. It was Mrs. Pierce's retracing of the trail, however, that led us to believe personally that the more popular theories, such as the Mitchell one reprinted in the October issue, were based on the wrong trail. C.P.*

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